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THE

HISTORY

OF

FRANCE,

FROM THE

ACCESSION OF HENRY THE THIRD,

IN 1574,

TO THE

DEATH OF HENRY THE FOURTH,

IN 1610.

PRECEDED BY

A VIEW OF THE CIVIL, MILITARY, AND POLITICAL STATE OF EUROPE,

BETWEEN THE MIDDLE, AND THE CLOSE OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY;

AND FOLLOWED BY

A VIEW OF THE STATE OF EUROPE

AT THE ACCESSION OF LOUIS THE THIRTEENTH.

By Sir N. WILL^M. WRAXALL, Bart.

THE SECOND EDITION.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

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THE

HISTORY

OF

FRANCE.

BOOK THE THIRD.

REIGN OF HENRY THE FOURTH.

CHAP. I.

State of the French crown and nation, at the extinction of the family of Valois. — Nature and foundations of the King of Navarre's title. — Obstacles to his accession. — His character. — Transactions in the royal camp, after the death of Henry the Third. — Recognition of Henry the Fourth, by the nobility and troops. — Conditions annexed to it. — Epernon quits the camp. — Critical situation of the new King. — Transactions in Paris. — Conduct and qualities of the Duke of Mayenne. — Retreat of Henry into Normandy. — He is pursued by Mayenne. — Combat of Arques. — Henry marches to Paris. — Attacks the suburbs. — Exploits of the royal army. — Cardinal of Bourbon proclaimed King by "the League." — State of that faction. — View of the principal European powers, amicable or hostile to Henry the Fourth. — Condition of Spain at this period.

BY the sudden and unexpected death of Henry the Third, and the total extinction in his person of the male descendants of the house

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CHAP. I.

1589. State of France.

house of Valois, which had reigned over the French during the space of two hundred and sixty-two years; the right of succession to the crown of France, seemed incontestably to devolve on the King of Navarre, as first prince of the blood. His title had even been solemnly recognized, and strenuously recommended by the late King, to the principal nobility and officers who surrounded him, as he lay expiring at St. Cloud. But, notwithstanding the justice and legitimacy of his pretensions, there existed many circumstances, which if they did not totally subvert, might yet greatly invalidate their force, in the general opinion of the nation.

Right of succession to the crown.

Adherence of the King of Navarre, to the reformed religion.

The King of Navarre not only adhered with apparent zeal and fervor, to the reformed religion; but he had pertinaciously rejected the warmest solicitations, accompanied by the most flattering offers, made to shake his faith. Henry the Third had vainly endeavoured, by every motive of interest, ambition, and by their common danger, to induce him to return into the bosom of the Catholic church. Even the confidential embassy of Epernon, and the expostulations of the Queen-mother, Catherine of Medicis; together with the prospect of the crown itself, as the reward of his conversion, had been found unequal to effect so salutary a change. He had been, only a few years preceding, involved in the penalties annexed to a sentence of papal excommunication. Sixtus the Fifth, who occupied the chair of St. Peter, whose irascible temper was inflamed by the suggestions of the

the emissaries of Spain and of the Guises; acting in virtue of the apostolic power arrogated by the Romish pontiffs, declared the King of Navarre a relapsed, and apostate heretic. The inabilities inflicted by the Anathema, included even the patrimonial inheritance and possessions of the family of Bourbon, as well as the crown of France, which he was pronounced incapable to inherit[a]. It is not easy for us in the present age, to calculate or to appreciate the effects of this malediction, among a people accustomed to regard the decisions of the Holy See, as dictated by infallibility, and inspired by more than human wisdom. CHAP. I. 1589.

Contempt of the royal power.

The sceptre itself, in the unskilful, or inactive hands of Henry the Third, had ceased to enforce obedience, or to inspire respect. The effeminacy and insurmountable indolence, rather than the crimes or incapacity of that infatuated Prince, had rendered him an object of contumely to his own subjects. A great and powerful faction, availing itself of the pretence of religion; sustained on one hand, by the spiritual approbation and authority of the sovereign pontiff, and supported on the other, by the arms and treasures of Philip the Second; had risen in rebellion. At its head, was beheld the Duke of Mayenne, a leader neither deficient in capacity, nor in ambition; who was impelled by every incitement of honor, affection, and interest, to revenge the recent assas-

Factions. Duke of Mayenne.

[a] Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 297, 298.

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sination of his brothers at Blois. He was in possession of the capital, of the richest provinces, of the most commodious harbours, and of the affections of a great proportion of the inhabitants of France. The rapid success of the arms of the crown, after Henry the Third had been awakened from his habitual apathy, had, it is true, promised a speedy and prosperous termination of the contest. Paris, invested by superior forces, who were elated with advantages of various kinds gained over the insurgents, seemed to be on the point of unconditional submission. But, the knife of Clement had deprived Henry at once of life and victory, in the moment when fortune appeared to be most propitious to the royal cause. The nobility, who from a sense of duty and allegiance, had flocked to his standard, and crouded round the throne, might not easily be induced to own a Hugonot successor. Still less could it be expected that the Minions, whom the improvident profusion or partiality of Henry had elevated to the summit of favor and preferment; would transfer their affections and services to a stranger, in the estimation of many among them, scarcely their superior. The army, composed of mercenaries and stipendiaries, of opposite religions, and of different nations, could only be retained under its banners, by the powerful inducement of constant and regular pay. In the exhausted state of the finances, and the unsettled condition of the crown, it seemed hardly possible that the King of Navarre could

Paris.

The nobility.

The army.

by

by any expedient supply so essential a defect, or hope to prevent the desertion of his forces. CHAP. I. 1589.

Nor was even his title, however incontestable it might be esteemed, altogether exempt from some degree of obscurity, doubt, and uncertainty. Being indeed lineally descended, in common with Henry the Third, from the same ancestor, Louis the Ninth, more commonly denominated St. Louis; he was related to his predecessor, in the tenth to the eleventh degree of male consanguinity[b]. But, history furnished no example of a crown, inherited or obtained in virtue of so remote a right, which remounted near three hundred and twenty years, to the period of St. Louis's decease in 1270: it was even questioned among the most eminent civilians, whether in cases of private succession, all claims derived from blood, did not cease and extinguish after the sixth generation. Nature of the King of Navarre's title.

The family of Bourbon itself might even produce numerous and formidable competitors to the King of Navarre. His uncle, the Cardinal of Bourbon, had been publickly declared by a royal edict issued in the preceding year, the nearest relation of the reigning sovereign; and as such, entitled to various privileges or prerogatives, usually conferred exclusively on the presumptive heir to the throne[c]. The zeal of that prelate for the Catholic religion, which Competitors. Cardinal of Bourbon.

[b] Chronol. Noven. vol. i. p. 18 and p. 253. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 405.
[c] De Thou, vol. x. p. 349.

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rose to bigotry; having induced him to lend his name and co-operation to all the machinations of "the League," that faction affected to consider him as the only rightful successor. His title had not wanted advocates to support its validity, writings being composed and disseminated, in order to prove it superior to the claim of his nephew [d]. Even though the age, infirmities, and ecclesiastical profession of the Cardinal, should be thought to disqualify him for swaying the sceptre, or devolving it to his immediate posterity; and though his detention in confinement rendered him unable to mix personally in the contest; yet other rivals might be found in the house itself of Bourbon. The Prince of Conti, the Count of Soissons, and the young Cardinal of Vendome; three sons of Louis, Prince of Condé, who fell at Jarnac, by a second marriage; had all been educated in the Romish persuasion. They had, indeed, hitherto manifested the most unshaken zeal as well as devotion towards the chief and head of their race, whom they had favored, or openly aided, during the preceding reign. But it was not impossible, that their virtue might prove unequal to the temptation and prospect of a crown; or that ambition might altogether extinguish their sense of loyalty and allegiance.

Sons of Louis, Prince of Condé.

The Salic law itself, on which basis alone rested all the pretensions of the King of Navarre, however venerable and sacred it had become from long prescription; was, like all

The Salic law.

[d] De Thou, vol. x. p. 350, 351. Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 18, 19.

human

human institutions, subject to change, and liable to be annulled or abrogated by a variety of circumstances. In the present situation of France, no revolution could be regarded as improbable. The States General, if convoked, might, as being the representatives of the nation, proceed to exercise their inherent and inalienable right of electing a new sovereign, on the complete extinction of the male line of the reigning family. If proximity of blood, independant of paternal descent, should be regarded as conferring a title to the crown, the King of Navarre must be necessarily removed to an immeasurable distance. Catherine of Medicis, who dreaded, and deprecated the accession of the branch of Bourbon, which she beheld as certain, if not imminent, after the decease of her youngest son, the Duke of Anjou; had endeavoured to subvert, or to elude the Salic law. With this view she attempted to persuade the King her son, to adopt his nephew, the hereditary Prince of Lorrain, son to Claudia of France, second daughter of Henry the Second; and to procure his recognition as presumptive successor to the throne[c]. Nor does it seem improbable, that the scheme might have been realized, if the Prince for whom she projected to secure so rich an inheritance, had possessed the great endowments, intellectual and personal, which distinguished his relation, the Duke of Guise. Philip the Second on the other hand, might prefer the claim of the In-

1589.

Plan of Catherine of Medicis, to alter the succession.

Other pretenders.

[c] Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 276, 277.

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1589. or claimants.

fanta Clara Isabella, his daughter by Elizabeth of Valois, elder sister of Claudia, Duchess of Lorrain. Charles Emanuel, Duke of Savoy, whose aspiring mind, and enterprizing ambition, were ill assorted to the barren and contracted nature of his dominions; could with nearly equal reason urge his descent on the maternal side, from Francis the First. Above all these competitors, the Duke of Mayenne himself, elevated by a coincidence of circumstances to the supreme command of "the League," and disposed to avail himself of the bounty of fortune; might seize the vacant sceptre, and become, like Hugh Capet in the tenth century, the founder of a new Dynasty of Kings.

Character of Henry, King of Navarre.

Such were the critical, and almost desperate circumstances, in which the French monarchy was left, at the extinction of the family of Valois: circumstances which strongly remind us of the similar calamities experienced by the nation, after the deposition and juridical murder of the last sovereign of the house of Bourbon, to which they bear a close resemblance. It must, indeed, be owned that the King of Navarre was more indebted for his ultimate attainment of the crown, to the eminent qualities of mind and body, conferred on him by nature; than to the justice of his pretensions, however manifest they might be, or however acknowledged by the great majority of the people. He was at this time in the prime of life, and in the vigor of his talents, not having accomplished

his thirty-sixth year. Accustomed from his earliest infancy, among the Pyrenean mountains, to endure the inclemency of the elements, and the vicissitudes of the seasons; he had become habituated to the boldest exertions, and capable of supporting the severest privations[f]. His very childhood had been familiarized with danger, and trained to war, under one of the most celebrated commanders of the age, Coligni. He was present, at the age of fourteen, though rather as a spectator, than as an actor, at the battle of Montcontour, not having been permitted to mix in the shock of arms: yet, at that early period of life, displaying an aptitude for military affairs, he had pointed out the defect in the disposition of Coligni's troops, which eminently produced the defeat of the Hugonot forces[g]. Exempted after long debates, from the indiscriminate slaughter of his friends and adherents, at the massacre of St. Bartholomew; he was only reserved for every species of insult, menace, and severity. His captivity did not even terminate with the life of Charles the Ninth. Under the succeeding reign, he was transferred as a prisoner of state, by Catherine of Medicis, wherever the court removed; exposed to perpetual machinations against his life, compelled to profess a religion contrary to his conviction, and finally reduced to a state of oblivion or of insignificance.

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1589.

His education.

Captivity.

During more than thirteen years, which had elapsed since his escape from the court of

Exile in Gascony.

[f] Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 243.

[g] Ibid. vol. i. p. 251.

Henry

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Henry the Third; he had remained a fugitive and an exile, in a remote corner of the kingdom situated beyond the Garonne: sometimes forgotten, but more frequently persecuted by the Guises; and driven to the last extremities by the hostile invasion of the royal armies, which under Marshal Biron, pursued him even to the gates of his little capital. Nearly destitute of territories or revenues, and beholding his antient patrimony of Navarre incorporated with the Spanish monarchy; he was equally deprived of political power. Bourdeaux, though the chief city of the province of Guyenne, of which he enjoyed the nominal government, constantly refused to permit his entrance into the place. Yet, under so many adverse circumstances, the superiority of his talents, the heroism of his character, and the affability of his deportment, procured him numerous adherents. The court of Navarre, which sometimes was held at Pau, but more frequently at Nerac, became crouded with gentlemen and adventurers; who, attracted by the amenity of Henry's manners, and sustained by the flattering prospect of his probable, or possible succession to the French crown, waited with firmness and constancy, for the future and distant recompence of their fidelity. We must admit that, with the single exception of Gustavus Vasa among the Swedes, Providence has rarely united in any one individual of modern ages, a greater number of qualities calculated to support a sinking monarchy, to extri-

Want of power.

His talents.

extricate from anarchy a whole nation, and to contribute to the general felicity of mankind. CHAP. I. 1589.

His courage, ardent and even impetuous in the field, was yet void of temerity, controlled by reason, and directed by judgment. On a day of battle, he knew, like William the Third, how to unite the functions of a general, with the valor of a private soldier; but he possessed better talents for war, more activity and good fortune, than distinguished the English King. At Coutras, after making the ablest disposition to secure a victory, he mingled in the fray like a common man, at the head of the squadrons; took various prisoners with his own hand, and pursued the flying enemy, his sword covered with blood [h]. Francis the First, whom he resembled in many points of character, had manifested the same chivalrous spirit at Marignan, and at Pavia. No prince ever sacrificed less to ease or indolence than Henry, and he possessed a body capable of seconding the energy of his mind. In the camp, he was indefatigable, patient of hunger, content with short and interrupted repose; present at every post, and committing nothing to delegates, which could be superintended in person. Tolerant in an age of persecution, he was free from all the religious asperity characteristic of the period; and he extended the same equal protection to the Catholic, as to the Protestant followers, who adhered to his cause. He had displayed the expansion of his mind, by inducing the inhabitants of

Courage.

Activity.

Tolerance and liberality.

[h] Sully, vol. i. p. 59. D'Aubigné, Hist. Univ. vol. iii. p. 54, 55.

Rochelle,

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Rochelle, to admit the celebration of the Romish worship within their walls. When, at the head of a victorious army of Hugonots, he advanced through Poitou, into the province of Berry, only a short time preceding his reconciliation with Henry the Third; he maintained the Catholics in the full possession and enjoyment of all their civil, as well as ecclesiastical rights[1]. A conduct so enlarged and beneficent, while it excited universal esteem, endeared him to the French nation.

Courtesy.

Accustomed to live on terms of familiarity, and almost of equality, with his courtiers, the King of Navarre might rather be considered as a distinguished individual, than in the light of a sovereign prince. Unable to remunerate his servants, like other monarchs; the paucity of his revenues, and the deficiency of his pecuniary resources, necessitated him to supply the defect, by augmented affability and courtesy. Possessing a heart capable of the impressions of esteem and attachment, he enjoyed a privilege rarely accorded to those who occupy a throne; and he could boast of having friends, as well as flatterers. We may see in the writings of Sully and of d'Aubigné, with what sincerity or even severity, those steady, inflexible followers ventured, on various and delicate occasions, to treat their master. We follow with sympathy and interest, the narration of their frequent quarrels, reconciliations, and

[1] De Thou, vol. x. p. 584—586.

mutual

mutual forgiveness. Born with a temper naturally disposed to cheerfulness and gaiety, he seemed never to be dejected by adverse fortune, or overcome by difficulties. Observant of his promises, and tenacious of his word, in a period of general treachery and duplicity; he stood strikingly opposed in that particular, to the character of the time. In the magnanimous contempt of injuries, he was not inferior to his predecessor, Louis the Twelfth; and in clemency he equalled the Roman Dictator. Economical, like Elizabeth, Queen of England, from reflexion and necessity; he was nevertheless, like her, free from the taint of avarice; and he knew how to reward with promptitude, or to dispense favours with liberality. His education, which had been such as befitted his high birth, early familiarized him with the great writers of Greece and Rome; though his disposition, averse to study, was little calculated or inclined to any sedentary occupations. [k]

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Clemency.

These eminent virtues, and splendid endowments, were not however unmixed with numerous frailties or weaknesses. Yet even in those defects, we may find much to extenuate, and much to pardon. The sallies of his anger were violent, but they speedily gave place to the natural placability and benignity of his nature. The accusations of insensibility, parsimony, and ingratitude towards the friends or servants, who had expended their fortunes, and exposed

Defects of that Prince.

Parsimony.

[k] Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 247, 248

their

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their lives in his service; may not be altogether destitute of truth or foundation[l]. But, such imputations might be affixed on Trajan, or on Marcus Aurelius: they were made against Elizabeth, were renewed with more justice against Charles the Second, and must be in a certain degree laid to the charge of every sovereign. In order to enable us to decide on their validity, concurring testimonies are requisite to produce conviction. The predominant, or rather characteristic vice of the King of Navarre, consisted in his unrestrained libertinism, and attachment to the pleasures of women. Nor did it affix a greater blemish on his moral reputation, than it proved injurious to his views and enterprizes of every kind. It enervated his valor, checked his progress, and impelled him on the most unjustifiable, or pernicious acts. Such, indeed, was the empire of gallantry, or rather of debauch in the court of Navarre, that it mixed with all the operations of policy; extending its influence even on the decision of peace and war.

Libertinism.

The renewal of hostilities in 1580, between Henry the Third and his Hugonot subjects, was not only unprovoked on the part of the crown; it originated wholly in the resentment of the ladies of the court of Nerac, who having induced their lovers to take up arms, involved the kingdom in civil dissension[m]. Some years afterwards, in 1587, the same subservience to female seduction suspended in some measure the exertions

Pernicious effects of his passion for women.

[l] D'Aubigné, Memoires, p. 60 and 63, and 104.

[m] Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 223. D'Aubigné Memoires, p. 78, 79.

of

of the King of Navarre, when he had defeated the Duke of Joyeuse at Coutras. Instead of advancing, as he probably might, and unquestionably ought to have done, towards the Loire, at the head of his victorious troops, and thereby extricating the German army which had entered France on the eastern side; he quitted so fair a prospect of renown and advantage, by returning into Gascony, in order to lay the trophies of his late triumph, at the feet of his mistress, the Countess of Guiche[n]. Should we nevertheless seek to draw a veil over these defects, or to find reasons for palliating them, we may be furnished with some materials, in the universal profligacy, and licentiousness characteristic of the age; in the youth and complexion of the King of Navarre; and above all, in the abandoned excesses of his Queen, Margaret of Valois; who, not satisfied with dishonoring his bed by her infidelities, condescended to become the instrument of his lawless pleasures, and to facilitate his projects of debauchery or seduction.[o]

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Reflexions.

If any part of the French history since the accession of the Capetian line, can be said to bear a strong analogy, and to offer a marked resemblance, to the period on which we are now about to enter, it is undoubtedly the accession and reign of Charles the Seventh. Like Henry of Bourbon, that Prince beheld his capital and the greater part of his dominions, in the hands of an inveterate, as well as powerful

Comparison of Charles the Seventh,

[n] D'Aubigné, Hist. Univ. vol. iii. p. 58.
[o] Vie de Marg. de Val. p. 314, 315.

enemy.

CHAP. I.

enemy. John Duke of Bedford, Regent of France, commanded in Paris in 1422, with not less authority, than was exercised in 1589, by the Duke of Mayenne. The situation and prospects of Charles of Valois, might even justly be regarded in many points of view, as more desperate than those of the King of Navarre. His pretensions, as founded on birth, were indeed more evident and indisputable, he being the only surviving son of Charles the Sixth, whereas Henry claimed in virtue of a remote collateral descent. But Isabella of Bavaria, mother of Charles the Seventh, the implacable adversary of her own son, had joined the English against him: while the Dukes of Burgundy, then almost co-equal in power and extent of territory with the French kings, aided the cause of Henry the Fifth and Sixth. The extrication of the monarchy in the first instance, was eminently due to the appearance and interposition of the Maid of Orleans; a name never to be mentioned without admiration; and herself a Phænomenon, whose effect, whatever superficial enquirers may assert, is least to be satisfactorily explained by those, who have most profoundly investigated the facts and evidence relative to her. She forms an historical problem, impossible to solve, either by supposing her a political engine of state, or a mere vulgar enthusiast. In the second instance, the preservation of France resulted principally from the heroic qualities,

1589.

and Henry the Fourth.

Maid of Orleans.

energies,

energies, valor, and prudence, with which Providence had endowed Henry the Fourth. CHAP. I.

During the remainder of the night in which Henry the Third expired, the King of Navarre, who had retired to his quarters at Meudon, followed by a considerable number of the nobility; convened his select and confidential friends, in order to deliberate on the measures necessary to be adopted in the emergency. The crisis was one of the most awful and important, which could occur in the history of nations; as on the wisdom, vigor, and promptitude of his counsels, might in a great measure depend his eventual attainment of the throne of France. A moment of pause and stupefaction had succeeded to the death of his predecessor, and the extinction of a line of princes, who had swayed the sceptre for above two centuries and a half. The nobility, officers, and troops, all alike agitated with contending emotions, remained uncertain of their own future destiny, as well as of the fate of the monarchy itself. It was requisite to avail himself of the instant, by embracing a system, either of prudence and safety, or of enterprize and audacity, before the general impression of loyal indignation for the murder of their common sovereign, had been weakened or dissipated by time. Above all it imported to retain the army under its banners, and to procure the universal recognition of the King of Navarre, as the only lawful successor to the crown.

1589. State of the royal camp, at the time of Henry the Third's decease.

Momentous crisis.

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Advice of his adherents.

The most cautious or timid of that Prince's adherents, doubtful of the allegiance of the nobility, and the fidelity of the troops, who might, it was apprehended, even seize and deliver him up to his enemies; thought that his personal safety ought to be alone considered as the first object. They advised him instantly to direct his march towards the Loire, and to establish his authority at the city of Tours, where Henry the Third had fixed the parliament of Paris; from which central point he might easily maintain a communication with the provinces of Poitou, Guienne, and Gascony, where his friends were numerous and powerful [P]. But this sentiment, no less inglorious than injudicious, was warmly as well as successfully combated by others of his counsellors. They maintained with equal eloquence and ability, that to abandon the country north of the Loire, and to make a precipitate retreat from the capital, would be followed by the most fatal consequences, at the commencement of a new reign. They declared that such a step, which could only be deemed a flight, must necessarily produce all the injurious effects of so pusillanimous a determination: while vigor and firmness would confirm the wavering, awe the disaffected, and inspire with confidence the loyal. The nobility, if forsaken by their Prince, it was obvious, would consult their separate interests, and either join "the League," or retire

Opposite opinion and counsel.

[P] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 4.

to

to their castles, as uninterested spectators of the contest. They added, that only immediate and spirited exertions were requisite, in order to retain the Swiss auxiliaries, whom Sancy had brought to the aid of the late King; whose assistance, or desertion, might prove decisive of the future good or ill success of the royal cause. [q]

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Counsels so analogous to the character of the King of Navarre, and so incontestably dictated by the nature of his situation, were instantly pursued by that Prince. Sancy, whose loyalty and zeal had not waited to be impelled into action, anticipating the application which he foresaw would be made to him; convoked the principal officers of the Swiss forces under his command, and disclosed to them the intelligence of Henry the Third's decease. He then besought them, by the recollection of their antient virtue, fidelity, and national honor, not to abandon Henry of Bourbon, now become King of France. He represented to them, that the alliance and engagements of the Helvetic confederacy were made, not merely with the late monarch, but with the French crown itself, which continued permanent and unchangeable under every event. Finally he adjured them to give an example of temporary obedience and submission, by remaining firm in their allegiance, till a deputation could be sent to the Cantons; during the intermediate time, not

Henry embraces the latter sentiment.

Exertions of Sancy,

[q] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 4, 5.

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demanding or exacting the arrears of their pay, which it must be difficult, if not impossible for the new sovereign to furnish in the present conjuncture of affairs. [r]

and of Biron.

To these weighty and powerful exhortations, were added the entreaties of Marshal Biron; who, though he regarded the extinction, or dismemberment of the French monarchy, as imminent and inevitable, yet adhering in his own person inviolably to the order of succession, exerted himself to maintain the crown on the head of the King of Navarre [s]. The Switzers, after manifesting some symptoms of irresolution; sensible that they must not only lose the arrears of pay already due to them, but that they might with difficulty effect their return to their own country, through so many hostile provinces as must necessarily be traversed in the retreat; expressed their readiness to comply with the request of Sancy. He himself was deputed at the head of the most distinguished officers, to convey the welcome information to the new king. Henry received it with testimonies of joy, and expressions of gratitude, proportioned to the magnitude and importance of the service. It was scarcely possible indeed to perform an act of greater consequence to his future prospects, or which seemed likely to be attended with more beneficial effects. Already he began to feel the crown in some degree confirmed upon his head: renouncing therefore

The Switzers agree to remain firm to Henry.

Vigorous measures embraced.

[r] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 5, 6.

[s] Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 406.

every

every idea of marching towards Tours, it was unanimously resolved to prosecute the war in the provinces to the north of the Loire, and to embrace the most vigorous measures for extinguishing the rebellion of "the League." [t] CHAP. I. 1589.

Prosperous as this commencement of affairs might be esteemed, a more arduous and doubtful task remained to be undertaken. Neither the adherence of the Hugonots, nor the cooperation of the foreign troops, if unsupported by the Catholic princes, nobility, and officers in the royal army, could maintain the King of Navarre on the throne. Even his title appeared to want its best stamp of authenticity, and to be essentially deficient in validity, till it was recognized by the latter illustrious body. They had already met, in the very house where Henry the Third expired, in order to deliberate on the steps requisite to be taken under such new and extraordinary circumstances. The debates were long, violent and tumultuous. Those individuals who were either bigotted or disaffected, declared their resolution to prefer the spiritual interests of religion, before all other considerations; peremptorily refusing to acknowledge a prince excommunicated by the Holy See, inimical to the Catholic faith, and incorrigible in error [u]. The smaller number, whose loyalty to the crown, sustained by a desire of preserving the integrity and indivisibility of the monarchy, extinguished their scruples, or sur-

Convocation of the Catholic nobility.

3d Aug.

Debates in the assembly.

[t] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 7, 8.

[u] Davila, p. 823, 824.

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mounted their apprehensions, professed a readiness to own the King of Navarre unconditionally; conceiving that it imported, even for the interests of religion, to let that recognition precede every other measure. Between the two extremes, arose a third proposition, which was at length adopted with a degree of general consent. They agreed to send a deputation, with offers of declaring Henry of Bourbon King of France, and of maintaining him with their lives and fortunes, on the express condition that he would immediately renounce his religious tenets, and assume the public exercise of the Romish worship. Two of the most distinguished members of the nobility, the Dukes of Longueville and of Luxembourg, were empowered and enjoined to communicate to him the determination of the assembly. [x]

Proposition ultimately adopted.

Magnanimous answer of the King.

In the answer made by Henry to so unanimous and important a notification, we are at a loss whether most to admire his judgment, his magnanimity, or the elevation and dignity of his sentiments. After having deliberated on the message, and weighed its nature, in a select convocation of his most faithful adherents; he replied without perturbation or uneasiness, that he could not accept the tender made him of the sceptre, on the condition annexed to it by the donors. He represented to the Catholic deputies, that the immediate desertion of a religion which he had followed

[x] Davila, p. 822—825. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 407, 408.

from

from conviction, and the assumption of another rule of faith, without examination or information of any sort; would dishonor him in his own estimation, as well as in that of all mankind. He professed nevertheless, his desire of being instructed, and his disposition to submit himself and his opinions, to the decision of a general, or a national council, legitimately assembled. He reminded them of the invariable and steady adherence to his promises, on which he had always valued himself; offering to submit to any conditions or limitations, which might be judged necessary to secure the Catholic faith and ecclesiastical establishment. While he assured the nobility of France, in terms of gratitude and affection, that they formed the objects of his paternal solicitude, the especial support of the throne, shaken and convulsed by faction; he conjured them not to dishonor their order, by abandoning the lineal heir of their antient monarchs, by leaving unavenged the recent murder of his predecessor, and by exposing the kingdom to the utmost efforts of anarchy and rebellion. [y]

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A resolution at once so temperate and so conciliating, yet blended with majesty and firmness, produced the effect for which it was intended. An instrument being prepared, was signed by the contracting parties; in virtue of which, the princes of the blood, the lords, gentlemen, and great officers of every description

Its beneficial effect.

[y] Davila, p. 825, 826. De Thou, vol. xi. p. 11—14.

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1589. Engagement contracted by Henry.

in the royal camp, acknowledged Henry of Bourbon for their only and rightful sovereign. He engaged on his part, to maintain inviolate, the antient, national religion; to cause himself to be instructed in the principles and doctrines of the Romish persuasion, within the space of six months; to exclude from public offices or employments, such as made profession of the Hugonot worship or belief; and to adhere strictly to all the limitations contained in the edicts issued by his predecessor, granting liberty of conscience to the Protestants. By an express article, he permitted the nobility to depute one of their own body, for the purpose of expressing their filial obedience to the sovereign pontiff; as well as to explain to His Holiness the motives, which had induced them to own and support a heretic, excommunicated by the see of Rome[z]. Such were the conditions, upon which the King of Navarre received the homage and the oaths of allegiance of his Catholic subjects. He was immediately proclaimed, by the title of Henry the Fourth; a name which history has consecrated, though the Jacobin republicans of 1793 did not spare his remains; and which in all the revolutions of human affairs, will continue to present to every mind not totally insensible or uncultivated, the image of a prince born for the delight and for the felicity of mankind.

4th Aug. His proclamation.

Notwithstanding the degree of unanimity which had appeared in the proceedings relative

[z] Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 408, 409. Chron. Noven. vol. i. p. 244, 245. De Thou, vol. xi. p. 9, 10. Davila, p. 827, 828.

to

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to so great an object, and the apparent submission of all ranks to the new king; there were not wanting persons of the highest quality, who refused or declined to support his pretensions. The Duke of Epernon, long accustomed to exercise an almost uncontrouled authority under his late master, could ill submit to bend beneath a stranger. He had, indeed, from a sentiment of rivality towards Joyeuse, and from his hatred to the Guises, declared himself a partizan of the house of Bourbon, and endeavoured to effect the reconciliation of Henry the Third with his presumptive successor. But, many recent causes of disunion and alienation had arisen between him and the King of Navarre; nor was the high, independant spirit of the latter, formed to receive laws from an insolent and haughty favorite[a]. Epernon, apprehensive that Henry might likewise solicit him in his present distress, for pecuniary assistance, and unwilling to extend any relief to his new sovereign; not only refused to sign the declaration subscribed by the nobility, upon a slight pretence of punctilio, but demanded his immediate dismission. Quitting the camp, at the head of his numerous followers, but professing at the same time his determination neither to join the faction of "the League," nor the party of Spain; he retired first into the province of Touraine, and ultimately fixed his residence in the castle of Angouleme.[b]

Conduct of the Duke of Epernon.

He quits the camp.

[a] Davila, p. 822. [b] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 11. Davila, p. 828. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 409.

Nor

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1589. Nor did the spirit of desertion which had thus manifested itself, stop with Epernon. Many other noblemen imitating his example, withdrew under various pretexts or excuses, and retreated to their castles. One of them, Vitry, unrestrained by gratitude to the memory of his benefactor Henry the Third, or by duty towards his successor, openly joined the party of "the League." Happily, the precedent was copied by few, and reprobated by all. Yet, such was the general coldness or disaffection displayed among the soldiery, that the exertions of Biron, with difficulty retained the Switzers under their colours. So great was the desertion even among the French, that in the space of only five days subsequent to the assassination of the King, the army became reduced to less than half its numbers, and continued rapidly to diminish from one hour to another. Even the Hugonots themselves, doubtful of the adherence of their chief to his religious principles; and already dreading, or anticipating his reconciliation to the Romish church, as neither distant nor problematical; began to murmur at Henry's partiality towards the Catholics, accusing him of ingratitude towards those faithful followers, who had originally raised him to his present greatness [c]. In so delicate a situation, surrounded with perils, and distrustful of all, the King betrayed no dejection. Assuming from necessity, a dissimulation foreign to his character, and exerting the affability natural to

Discontent, and desertion in the royal army.

7th Aug.

Hugonots.

Able conduct and behaviour of Henry.

[c] Davila, p. 829, 830.

him,

him, he soothed, caressed, and promised by turns. To the Hugonots, as the companions of his early life, and adverse fortune, he affected to shew confidence and unreserve. Towards the ecclesiastics, he behaved with marks of consideration and respect, accompanied with expressions of veneration for the Holy See, and a disposition to be informed on points of doctrine. He honored the nobility and military officers, with the flattering appellations of the restorers of their country; the supporters of the royal dignity. Nor did he omit to conciliate the meanest of his subjects, by gracious speeches, by a commiseration of their distress, and by excuses for the unhappy necessity to which his enemies reduced him, of quartering his forces upon the peasants, and exacting from them contributions[d]. We are compelled to acknowledge, at every page of the reign of Henry the Fourth, that he owed his final acquisition of the crown, not so much to the private virtues, as to the various and admirable endowments, civil as well as military, which nature had united in his composition.

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Conciliating manners.

While these transactions were performed in the royal camp, events not less interesting and important had taken place within the walls of Paris. During the interval which elapsed between the first intelligence of Clement's attempt upon the person of Henry the Third, and the knowledge of its final consequence,

Events in Paris.

[d] Davila, p. 830.

all

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all was suspense, amazement, and agitation, throughout the capital. But no sooner was the intelligence of his death divulged, than the Parisians abandoned themselves to the most immoderate transports of universal and indecent joy. The Duchess of Montpensier, whose thirst of revenge for the loss of her brothers, could only be satiated by the King's blood; who is, not without reason, supposed to have been privy to the enterprize itself, and even to have stimulated the fanaticism of the assassin; betrayed her fierce and inexorable spirit in its utmost force[e]. Unrestrained either by the decorum of her rank and sex, or by any considerations of general propriety, she lavished encomiums on the crime, as an effort of pious and patriotic zeal: nor did she hesitate to distribute with her own hand, badges of exultation, among the principal adherents of "the "League[f]." The inhabitants of the metropolis, though their rage and detestation of the late King, as the murderer of the Guises, became in some measure extinguished by his death; were not less unanimous or violent in their determination to exclude from the throne, his presumptive successor. In order to maintain this spirit, so essential to all his views, the Duke of Mayenne, after communicating to the cities of his party, information of Henry the Third's assassination and decease; respecting which sanguinary act he however denied any previous

1589. Indecent joy of the inhabitants. Duchess of Montpensier.

Duke of Mayenne.

[e] De Thou, vol. x. p. 670.
[f] Mem. pour ser. a l'Hist. de Fra. p. 286, 287.

know-

knowledge or participation; prepared to embrace measures for the support and prolongation of his own assumed authority.[s] CHAP. I. 1589.

The vacancy of the throne, accompanied by the complete extinction of the reigning family, opened to an ambitious mind, prospects equally dazzling and unbounded in their nature. He beheld himself at the head of a faction possessed of authority, revenues, and resources, little short of royal. Various paths or modes of conduct, presented themselves to him for his choice and preference. If moderation, repose, and solid greatness, formed the objects of his research, he might gratify them to his utmost wish, by opening a negotiation with the new King; who, he well knew, was ready to grant him any terms however exorbitant, and almost to divide with him the monarchy itself. On a supposition that his scruples of conscience, or his apprehensions of the resentment of the zealous partizans of "the League," might deter him from treating with a Hugonot; a still more glorious and disinterested track lay before his view. He might address himself to the Catholic lords and officers in the royal camp, calling upon them to aid him in compelling their common sovereign to abjure his errors, and to return into the bosom of the Catholic church; or in case of Henry's refusal, to join with him and his adherents, in electing another individual of the royal blood, to fill the vacancy. So elevated a line of proceeding, would have

Objects, and prospects of Mayenne.

[s] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 19, 20.

placed

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placed him among the most illustrious names recorded in history: while it would have diffused felicity, restored general peace, secured religion, and entitled him to the applause of his own, as well as of future times. If ambition and the thirst of power predominated above every other consideration of private safety, or of public virtue, he might place the crown on his own head. Promptitude, energy, and decision, seemed alone wanting, in order to effect so vast an object. His sister, the Duchess of Montpensier, whose masculine mind, and enterprizing character, fitted her for the most daring projects; urged him, in defiance of open enemies, or of secret machinations, to seize the occasion, which, if lost or neglected, could never be retrieved[h]. Nor can it be questioned, that however adverse Philip the Second, or Sixtus the Fifth, might have been to his usurpation; and whatever repugnance the "Council of union," which, under the authority of the Duke of Mayenne, conducted the affairs of "the League," might manifest at his elevation to the throne; yet his instant assumption of the royal title and functions, must have extinguished or overborne all opposition[i]. Perhaps a situation more arduous and critical, has never been realized in the history of modern nations, previous to the era of the French Revolution; or a position which demanded a greater assemblage of talents, and more strength of mind, for deciding on the preferable line of action.

Critical and arduous situation.

[h] Davila, p. 834, 835. [i] Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 412. Memoires de Villeroy, vol. i. Avis au Duc de Mayenne, p. 502—547.

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It is in the character of the Duke of Mayenne himself, that we must seek for the explication of the alternative, which he ultimately embraced under these circumstances. In the vigor of life, and nearly of the same age with the King of Navarre, his reputation for valor and military skill, stood high; nor had the radical defects of his temper and disposition been disclosed, by his election to a post the most perilous which could be occupied by a subject. Naturally moderate in his desires, and averse to violent counsels, he had so strongly disapproved the measures of his brother the Duke of Guise, as even to have warned the late King to beware of his intentions and machinations [k]. A sense of honor and indignation, rather than a spirit of animosity, revenge, or rebellion, had impelled him to take up arms. He possessed in fact few of the essential qualifications for the head and chief of a great party. Irresolute in his determinations, slow in execution, distrustful of those about him, and negligent of affairs, he formed an unequal antagonist to the King of Navarre. Indulgent to his appetites, inert and sluggish in his person, attached to the gratifications or pleasures of the table, he allowed the favorable moment of action to escape by delay. Profuse from habit, and always destitute of pecuniary resources, he was compelled to recur to the Spanish crown for continual assistance. His gravity, tinctured with pride, seemed to be not far removed

Character of Mayenne.

His qualities.

[k] De Thou, vol. x. p. 444.

from

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from moroseness. Procrastinating and undecided, he always desired to postpone; embracing counsels of safety, rather than of energy.[l]

Procrastination and indecision.

In the present conjuncture, he neither aspired to render himself King of France, nor accepted the overtures which Henry the Fourth contrived to make for a definitive agreement between them, through the medium of Villeroy; a minister who, after his dismission from the office of Secretary of state in the late reign, had embraced the party of "the League[m]." Anxious only by some temporary expedient, to protract the decision on a point of such magnitude and importance, he determined therefore to place a phantom on the throne; while, acting as "Lieutenant-general of the crown," and head of the union, he retained the exclusive power in his own hands. The Cardinal of Bourbon, whose age and incapacities of various kinds, did not more disable him from swaying the sceptre, than his personal confinement removed him to a distance from the scene of action; was chosen by Mayenne, to represent the pageant of royalty. An edict was published by the parliament of Paris, at the Duke's desire, enjoining obedience to the imprisoned prelate, as the only rightful sovereign; exhorting at the same time, the people throughout all the provinces, to remain firm in the Catholic faith, and to oppose in every shape, the progress of heresy[n]. Notwith-

Recognition of the Cardinal of Bourbon's title.

[l] Mezeray, vol. x. p. 415.
[m] Davila, p. 831—833.
[n] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 20, 21. Davila, p. 835—837. Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 413.

standing

standing this apparent public recognition of the Cardinal's title, he was not however solemnly proclaimed King, by the name of Charles the Tenth, for some months afterwards. CHAP. I. 1589.

The new king meanwhile, incapable of continuing the siege of Paris with an army so reduced in numbers, and unable to induce the Duke of Mayenne to listen to any terms of accommodation, began to meditate his retreat from before the capital. Having divided his forces into three separate bodies, and having deposited the remains of his predecessor, without other pomp or ceremony than the necessity of the times would admit, in the church of Compiégne; he took the road towards Normandy. In that fertile province, of which a great portion was devoted to his cause, he hoped to recruit his troops, and to augment his adherents, while he received the supplies of men and money, which he expected from Elizabeth, Queen of England. Dieppe, a port capable by its situation on the shore of the British channel, of greatly facilitating the latter succours, having declared in his favor, admitted him into the place [o]. Elated with this event and other advantages, stimulated by the inhabitants of Dieppe, and unopposed by any army in the field, he ventured to march forward and approach Rouen, where the Duke of Aumale commanded, having under him twelve hundred cavalry. Though Henry was not possessed of sufficient strength to form the siege of so considerable a city, secured by an ample

Henry retreats from Paris.

He is received into Dieppe.

[o] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 16, 17.

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garrison; yet the enemy, alarmed at his appearance, and apprehensive of being invested, sent immediate intimation of their danger to the Duke of Mayenne, at the same time loudly invoking his assistance.[p]

Duke of Mayenne marches out of Paris.

That general, after having first provided for the internal safety and tranquillity of the capital, not inattentive to the summons, began his march at the head of about twenty thousand men, nearly a fourth part of whom were cavalry. As he advanced along the Seine, he retook several of the towns situated upon its banks, which had previously fallen into the King's possession. Such indeed was his numerical superiority, that if he had improved the favorable occasion with celerity, it seems probable he might either have crushed the royal forces, or at least have compelled them to engage under every circumstance of disadvantage. But, the Duke, instead of pressing forward with the utmost dispatch, having quitted his army for a few days, in order to concert measures in person with the Duke of Parma, commander of the Spanish troops in the Netherlands; his absence, and the necessary delay occasioned by it, allowed Henry a short interval, in which to take the most judicious steps for his defence. Retiring therefore from the vicinity of Rouen, once more towards the sea-coast, he ultimately fixed his camp at Arques; a small defenceless town, at an inconsiderable

2d September. The King encamps at Arques.

[p] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 19. Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 417.

distance from Dieppe. Conscious that he must be speedily surrounded, and attacked by the united military force of the enemy, he exerted the utmost diligence and skill in fortifying the position, which being naturally strong, was capable of being maintained against superior numbers. [q]

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His critical situation.

It must be confessed, on the maturest consideration, that although in his situation, no step more magnanimous, and at the same time more judicious, could probably have been embraced by Henry; yet, hope itself seemed to be almost extinguished by the difficulties and perils, with which he was reduced to struggle. His troops, diminished to only three thousand foot, two regiments of Switzers, and about twelve hundred cavalry, composed in the whole scarcely six thousand, five hundred men [r]. On the other hand, the army of "the League," augmented by various bodies of soldiers from Lorrain, Flanders, and the southern provinces of France, exceeded twenty-eight thousand. All the young nobility who were attached to the party of the Duke of Mayenne, apprized that a battle was inevitable, crouded to be present at an action, which it was supposed, would prove decisive of the fate of the war. Two considerable detachments of Henry's forces, commanded by Marshal d'Aumont, and by the Duke of Longueville, whom he had sent into

Superiority of the forces of the League.

[q] Davila, p. 842, 843. Hist. Gen. d'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 219. De Thou, vol. xi. p. 24.

[r] D'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 218. Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 417.

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Champagne and Picardy, lay too remote for arriving in time to his assistance. Elizabeth had not yet sent him her promised aid, pecuniary or military; while the enemy advanced towards him by rapid marches. So confident indeed was their commander of success, that he did not hesitate on promising Philip the Second, to take the King of Navarre, either dead or alive: while the credulity of the Parisians, aiding and sustaining their enmity, made them anticipate as certain his defeat and capture[s]. In the royal camp, a degree of dejection and terror began to manifest itself. Apprehensions were entertained, that while the Duke of Mayenne invested Henry in front, his retreat towards the sea might be intercepted by the naval forces of Flanders. The council of war even agitated the question, whether it might not be adviseable for the King to embark, while such a measure was yet practicable, and seek an asylum in the court of England. On circumstances so delicate and critical, may be said to have depended the fate of the French monarchy. The remonstrances of Biron, it is asserted, influenced not a little in the rejection of this pusillanimous and inglorious proposition[t]. It is impossible, when we contemplate the position of Henry before the combat of Arques, as well as during every part of his heroic contest against Mayenne, not to be reminded of the similar situation in which Frederic, King of Prussia, stood, previous to the battles of Ros-

Terror in the royal camp.

[s] Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 418, 419.
[t] Ibid. p. 418, 419.

bach

bach and of Lissa in 1757, where he successively defeated with very inferior numbers, the French and Austrians. The successful struggle of Frederic, protracted to a longer period, in opposition to a more powerful combination than menaced Henry, stands indeed alone in the history of modern nations, and will be considered in distant ages, with astonishment, as well as admiration.

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The army of "the League" arriving in sight of the lines of Arques, began their attack by skirmishes, in expectation of forcing the entrenchments, or putting the royalists into confusion. But, in both these attempts they were constantly repulsed with loss, notwithstanding their vast superiority; and it soon became evident that the troops of Mayenne, in military discipline and veteran skill, by no means equalled their opponents. The indefatigable activity, vigilance and intrepidity of Henry, inspiring his followers with a determination to make the most desperate exertions for their common safety; the panic diffused by the first appearance of the enemy, insensibly diminished among the royal bands. Aware of this circumstance, and desirous of availing himself of his superior numbers, the Duke drew out all his forces, and made a furious attack upon the entrenchment, which was during some time attended with complete success. The German auxiliaries in the service of "the League," treacherously feigning a desire to surrender, and to enter into the King's employ, obtained

Attack made by Mayenne.

21st September. Combat of Arques.

CHAP. I. 1589.

by that artifice an entrance within the lines. But, no sooner had they again formed, than encouraged by seeing the cavalry of Mayenne make a vigorous charge, they resumed their arms, fell furiously upon the division commanded by Marshal Biron, and involved it in complete disorder. All the valor and exertions of Henry, seconded by the coolness and bravery of his officers, were required to stem the torrent. The King, long abandoned by the greater part of his troops, saw himself exposed to the utmost danger, and nearly hopeless of extrication. Even after the enemy had been compelled to evacuate the entrenchments, not without a long and obstinate contest; the Duke of Mayenne might still have renewed the engagement with fresh troops, and almost a certainty of success, against the soldiers of the royal army, harassed by fatigue, and inferior in numbers. But, his habitual irresolution prevented him from improving his advantages. Having caused a retreat to be sounded, he drew off his forces, who were incommoded by the cannon of the castle of Arques.

Repulse of the Duke of Mayenne.

His actual loss in the engagement did not exceed five hundred men; but the injury sustained in his reputation, which was irretrievable, gave the royalists a decided ascendant during the remainder of the war[u]. So forcibly did Henry himself feel a conviction of the oversight, or the

[u] Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 263—267. Sully, vol. i. p. 69, 70. D'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 219—221. Davila, p. 844—851. De Thou, vol. xi. p. 27—30.

inca-

incapacity of that general, and so desperate had become his own situation, after the entrance of the enemy's troops within his lines, that he did not even conceal his sense of both those truths. On the evening of the same day he hesitated not publickly to declare, that the Duke of Mayenne was either not the soldier which the world believed him; or else that the head of "the League" had treated him with personal respect, and reserved him for a better occasion[x]. It may indeed be asserted that the combat of Arques constituted the crisis of his fate, and ultimate point of his adverse fortune. From that period, his affairs beginning to return in a contrary direction, he gradually re-ascended, as "the League" declined in a similar proportion. Various accidents and circumstances, not unmixed with severe misfortune, which perpetuated the duration of the civil wars, delayed the conclusion of peace; but the royal party was never afterwards reduced to extremities.[y]

CHAP. I. 1589.

Consequences.

Not-

[x] Davila, p. 851.

[y] A very diffuse narration of this celebrated combat, is to be found in Davila, in De Thou, and in Cayet's "Chronologie Noven-"naire." D'Aubigné likewise, and Sully, the latter of whom was personally present in the action, have left us ample information relative to it. The descriptions of all general engagements, present usually only an indistinct picture of carnage; but the combat of Arques is liable to this remark in an unusual degree. It is indeed impossible to comprehend clearly its nature, without a chart of the fortified camp of Henry the Fourth, which occupied two hills, and an intermediate valley; extending from the town of Arques, to the suburbs of Dieppe. The action itself became a scene of more than ordinary confusion, from the circumstance of the German Lansquenets obtaining an entrance within the trenches, and turning their arms against the royal troops. That perfidious act had nearly given May-

CHAP. I. 1589.

Notwithstanding the repulse which he had recently sustained, the general of "the "League"

enne a complete victory. Marshal Biron having been thrown from his horse, and long surrounded by them, the enemy pouring into the space, carried terror every where. Henry was during a considerable time, in the most imminent peril. Davila says, that disdaining to fly, he attempted to rally the scattered troops by exhortations and reproaches; exclaiming aloud, that "in all France there could not "be found fifty gentlemen, who had sufficient courage to die in "company with their king." There is nothing in antiquity more heroic or affecting than this act.

Various circumstances enabled the royal army to recover the honor of the day. The Count of Auvergne, natural son of Charles the Ninth, having made a vigorous charge at the head of the cavalry, killed with his own hand, Sagonne, who commanded the enemy's horse, and checked their fury. Chatillon, son to the great Coligni, coming up with two regiments of infantry, cried as he advanced, "Courage, "Sire! we are come to die with you!" Three hundred of the troops of "the League" being put to the sword, the trenches were recovered. Yet all accounts concur in admitting, that if Mayenne had not unnecessarily retarded the march of the main body, and thereby given the King an interval in which to rally, the day must have been his own. In Sully, are to be found some most picturesque and striking anecdotes of Henry's conduct, which inspire the highest idea of his valor, composure, and clemency. They bear so strong a stamp of truth and nature, that it is impossible to doubt their exactitude. Previous to the beginning of the action, the Count de Belin, says Sully, was taken prisoner by one of our parties, in the woods, and brought to the King. It was soon after day-break, and we were all seated at breakfast in a ditch, forming a circle round His Majesty. Henry, with his usual affability received and embraced the Count; who looking round him, with a degree of surprize, acquainted the King that in two hours, he would have thirty thousand enemies, horse and foot, to resist; and that for his own part, he did not see with what forces His Majesty meant to oppose them. "You do not "see them all, Monsieur de Belin," said the King, smiling; "for "you do not reckon God, and the justice of my cause, which assist "me."

It can hardly admit of a doubt, that Henry the Fourth would not have survived a defeat, or have been led in chains to Paris. There is in his character a sort of internal evidence, that he would, if vanquished, have perished on the field of battle. It seems impossible to speculate on the consequences which must have taken place, if Mayenne had been victorious, and if the King had fallen at Arques. Such speculations, though natural and unavoidable, do not form the legiti-

"League" made another attempt shortly afterwards to carry the trenches; but having been compelled to desist with considerable loss, and conscious that Henry would soon be joined by troops from various quarters, he finally determined on a retreat. His march was directed towards Picardy, with a view of receiving the auxiliary forces, sent by Philip the Second from Flanders to his support. Henry, liberated from the siege which he had undergone within the lines of his camp, was in like manner speedily reinforced. Marshal d'Aumont and the Duke of Longueville, who arrived the first, were succeeded by four thousand English troops; together with a small supply of money advanced him by Elizabeth, which the King with equal policy and generosity, immediately distributed among his soldiers. Without losing an instant in inactivity, he followed the enemy, retook the places captured by them, and endeavoured to provoke them to a general engagement. Finding that the Duke of Mayenne seemed not inclined to hazard the issue of a battle, and that he continued his progress towards the frontier of the Spanish Low Countries, Henry turned short upon Paris. The

CHAP. I.

1589. 5th October. Retreat of the army of "the League."

legitimate province of history. Perhaps in no portion of modern annals, is the interest excited by the events, so strong, or the apparent protection and interposition of Providence so marked and legible, as in the elevation of Henry the Fourth to the French crown; unless we except the chain of circumstances which have conducted Bonaparte, from his stupendous elevation in the spring of 1812, to his degradation and fall in the spring of the present year. Frederic the Great, during the seven years' war, awakens anxious solicitude for his fate; but his character wants the benignity and amenity of the King of France.

astonish-

CHAP. I.

1589. The King marches to Paris.

astonishment of the inhabitants of that metropolis was heightened by their terror, when they beheld the Prince, whom they had only a few days preceding, considered as a fugitive and a prisoner, arriving before the walls, at the head of a numerous and victorious army. Profiting of their first alarm, and of the absence of their commander, the King caused the suburbs, which were defended by an entrenchment, to be attacked on every quarter. The enterprize, executed with vigor, was attended with complete success; and pushed with such celerity, that the Parisians had scarcely time sufficient to shut their gates against the royalists. If Henry's artillery had been brought up without loss of time, nothing could have saved the capital from being entered by storm. The carnage was prodigious; and the ransoms paid by those who fell into the hands of the conquerors, served to compensate for the defect of regular pay.[z]

1st November. He storms the suburbs,

and retires from the city.

Alarmed at the danger which menaced Paris, the Duke of Mayenne instantly returned to its relief, entering it with his army on the day subsequent to the capture of the suburbs. Henry, whose forces were not sufficient to besiege him in the place, on receiving the intelligence, withdrew slowly to the distance of a few miles; and drawing up his army in sight of the Parisians, waited to ascertain if their leader was dis-

[z] D'Aubigné, Hist. Univ. vol. iii. p. 223, 224. Davila, p. 856. De Thou, vol. xi. p. 32—34. Sully, vol. i. p. 70. Chron. Noven. vol. i. p. 270, 271. Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 426.

posed

posed to try anew the chance of war. But the troops of "the League" had not yet recovered their disgrace at Arques; and the King finding that his challenge was not accepted, directed his course to Estampes, of which town he made himself master in eight days. Incapable of compelling the enemy to oppose him in the field, he a second time divided his army into three bodies, and pursued his march towards the Loire: while the Duke of Longueville and Givry, at the head of two considerable detachments, sustained his adherents in Picardy, and in Champagne. Victory attended him, wherever he moved. Vendome, a city of his patrimonial domain, capable from its strength, of making a long resistance, was entered by the soldiers, after a short and feeble defence [a]. Notwithstanding the advanced season, he continued unremittingly to push his military operations. Having visited the city of Tours, into which place he made his entry amidst the acclamations of the inhabitants; and having, on account of the distracted condition of the kingdom, postponed his promised convocation of the nobility for the settlement of religion, till the month of March ensuing; he rejoined his troops. Mans, which fell into his possession by capitulation, was followed by the reduction of various other places. Entering Normandy, in defiance of the rigors of winter, he compelled Alenson to surrender; made

CHAP. I.

1589.

Exploits of Henry.

He takes several places.

[a] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 65, 66. Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 275, 276.

prisoners

CHAP. I. 1589.

prisoners the garrison of Falaise, and their commander, the Count of Brissac; then approaching the sea-coast a third time, after an obstinate siege, he became master of Honfleur, at the mouth of the Seine. The indefatigable activity of his exertions, together with the rapidity of his success, while it increased the confidence of his own forces, impressed his adversaries with amazement and consternation. [b]

Inactivity of Mayenne.

During these important transactions, the Duke of Mayenne, naturally dilatory and inert, either remained inactive at Paris, occupied with regulations of a political nature; or made only feeble efforts for the recovery of his military character, and the re-establishment of the affairs of his party. After a species of Interregnum, as it might justly be denominated, of near four months, subsequent to Henry the Third's decease, that commander, fearful lest the King of Spain, in conjunction with the Holy See, should attempt to nominate a successor to the throne; caused the Cardinal of Bourbon to be publickly proclaimed sovereign of France, under the title of Charles the Tenth. He did not the less retain in his own hands the whole executive power of the crown; his recognition of the imprisoned Cardinal producing the effect which he had foreseen, and which he probably desired. Henry, apprehensive that if his uncle should by any accident be liberated, "the League" might derive advantages from his name, redoubled the precautious for securing

21st November. Cardinal of Bourbon, proclaimed King.

[b] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 67—69, and p. 80—85. Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 296—299, and p. 317, 318.

him

him in confinement. He had already been removed to the castle of Fontenay in Poitou, where he was guarded with the utmost vigilance. [c] CHAP. I. 1589.

The internal feuds and animosities of "the "League," together with the number of rival chiefs nearly equal in rank, who composed that faction; when added to the opposite nature of their views, pretensions, and expectations;—these causes imposed great, if not insurmountable obstacles, to the success of their operations. Mendoza, the embassador of Philip the Second, who resided in the French capital, dispensing the largesses of his master, with politic attention to the Spanish interest, was far from rendering the Duke of Mayenne independant of the court of Madrid. The arrival of Gaëtano, the Papal Legate dispatched by Sixtus, tended to augment, rather than to diminish the jealousy and distrust of that general, by his notorious partiality to the measures of Spain. Mayenne did not wait for his presence, in order to reject the proposition of Mendoza, for acknowledging Philip Protector of the League, though he warmly demanded supplies of men and money for supporting the war. The Dukes of Nemours and Aumale, as well as the hereditary Prince of Lorrain, augmented by their continual dissensions, the general confusion: while the Parisians, not less shaken and divided among themselves, seemed only to unite in one common sentiment, Internal feuds of "the League."

[c] Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 429, 430. Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 284.

the

CHAP. I. 1589.

the detestation of heresy, and the resolution to undergo every extremity, rather than submit to their rightful sovereign. [d]

Respect of foreign powers, for Henry.

On the other hand, Henry, by his courage, activity, and success, not only attracted the respect of his own subjects, but received the most flattering testimonies of friendship and consideration from foreign powers. The Republic of Venice, constantly attached for ages to France as her natural ally, and equally apprehensive of the augmenting power of Philip the Second; exhibited the warmest demonstrations of general joy, on the intelligence of Henry's

Venice.

accession. The Senate did not even hesitate or delay, notwithstanding the remonstrances and menaces of the Papal Nuntio, instantly to recognize him as King of France, by a public

Tuscany.

decree [e]. Ferdinand of Medicis, Great Duke of Tuscany, though he had recently contracted a close alliance with the Duke of Lorrain, by marrying his daughter; and though he was restrained by prudential considerations, from venturiug on so bold a measure as the Venetians had adopted; yet did not less transmit to the new King, assurances of his devotion. He even authorized Henry's agent at his court, to promise that prince the same pecuniary loan, which he had engaged to advance for his predecessor; and at the same time to open a negotiation for the marriage

[d] Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 284—289. Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 430—432.

[e] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 59—63, and p. 67. Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 296.

of

of his niece, the Princess Mary of Medicis, with one of the princes of the blood of France[f]. Similar testimonies of affection and respect were conveyed by the Duke of Mantua[g]. The Swiss Cantons had already deputed commissioners, with orders to felicitate him on his succession; enjoining their troops to remain faithful in his service, and requesting a renewal of the antient treaties subsisting between the Helvetic union and Henry the Third[h]. From the Protestant princes of the German empire, he was secure of receiving effectual support; and Casimir, who administered the affairs of the Palatinate during the minority of the Elector Palatine, demonstrated his adherence, by issuing directions to levy troops without delay, which were conducted to his assistance by Sancy, early in the ensuing year.[i]

CHAP. I. 1589. Switzerland. German princes.

Elizabeth, Queen of England, true to her own interests and to those of her people, at every period of her reign, furnished Henry with a body of forces, as we have seen, soon after the action at Arques. If her scanty revenues, added to the various demands on her exchequer, did not admit her to make considerable remittances of money, she nevertheless accompanied her military aid, with a small pecuniary supply[k]. Even James the Sixth, King of Scotland, a Prince whose pacific character,

England. Scotland.

[f] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 63, 64. Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 422.
[g] De Thou, ibid. [h] Ibid. p. 59.
[i] Ibid. p. 92—98. [k] Ibid. p. 32.

and

CHAP. I. 1589.

and inaptitude for war, seemed to disqualify him for active service in the field; yet, animated by enthusiasm for the maintenance of the Protestant religion, had offered, previous to Henry's elevation to the throne of France, to conduct six thousand Scots to his assistance in person, and to maintain them at his own expence[l]. He had recently proved the sincerity of his former professions, by sending over to Dieppe, a body consisting of one thousand men[m]. Prince Maurice of Nassau, who, notwithstanding his early youth, commanded the armies of the Republic of Holland; induced the States General, even while struggling themselves against the overwhelming power of Spain, to assist the King of France with ammunition and money[n]. The kingdoms of the North lay too remote, or were too feeble, to take any part in the troubles of the French monarchy. Denmark since the death of Frederic the Second, was governed by a minor prince, Christian the Fourth: while Sweden, under John the Third, had relapsed into the oblivion from which the country had been rescued by Gustavus Vasa his father. In Germany, the reigning branch of the house of Austria, which had excited such terror under Charles the Fifth; and which family, under Ferdinand the First, and Maximilian the Second, though with diminished power, continued still to inspire respect; was fallen into complete insignificance, in the person of Ro-

Holland.

Imperial house of Austria.

[l] Original Letter of Henry the Fourth, in Voltaire, vol. x. p. 239.
[m] Davila, p. 854. [n] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 240.

dolph

dolph the Second. That sovereign, who, before he ascended the Imperial throne, had given the most promising expectations of virtue and capacity, disappointed the general hopes entertained of his future administration. Dissolute, relaxed, and governed by his mistresses, he abandoned the concerns of the empire, to ministers destitute of ability or resolution. Indolent, and averse to business, though attached to speculative researches or studies, he suffered every species of abuse to be practised with impunity throughout his hereditary dominions. Despised in Bohemia, though he principally resided at the city of Prague, in preference to Vienna; he was nearly driven out of Hungary by the Turks, who progressively advanced along the banks of the Danube, towards the Austrian frontiers; while Rodolph became almost forgotten in the German empire [o]. Such a prince, who was ill qualified to second the ambitious projects of the court of Madrid; seemed to display as little inclination, as he possessed ability, to co-operate with the Spanish branch of his family, in their attempts to convulse and overturn the French monarchy.

CHAP. I.

1589. Rodolph the Second.

Henry wanted not, however, powerful foreign enemies to impede his conquests, and to retard, if they could not totally prevent, the reduction of his rebellious subjects. The Duke of Lorrain, impelled by the chimerical expectation of raising his son to the throne of France, and

Lorrain.

[o] Pfeffel, vol. ii. p. 218.

CHAP. I.

1589.

connected by a common origin, with the Duke of Mayenne, continued to aid the head of "the "League," with his forces [p]. Charles Emanuel, Duke of Savoy, allied to Philip the Second, whose youngest daughter he had married; sustained by Spanish troops, and ready to embark in any projects which promised augmentation of power or territory; had already advanced his pretensions to the French crown itself. But, embarrassed with a war in which he was engaged against the city and republic of Geneva, he was reluctantly compelled to defer the commencement of his plans, till the ensuing year. Those projects were principally limited to the conquest, or acquisition of the two important provinces of Dauphiné and Provence, which lying contiguous to his own dominions, he hoped to dissever from the monarchy of France [q]. Sixtus the Fifth, at the beginning of his pontificate, had manifested his enmity to the family of Bourbon, in its utmost force. But, his impatience and indignation at the species of captivity in which Philip the Second held the Holy See, and at the tyranny exercised over him by the Spanish Cardinals, who attempted to fetter, or to direct all his measures; inspired him at a later period of his reign, with other sentiments. Induced by the pressing instances of the court of Madrid, and of the agents of Mayenne, he had, it is true, dispatched his Legate Gaetano,

Savoy.

Charles Emanuel.

Sixtus the Fifth.

[p] Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 261, 262.

[q] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 72, 73, and p. 75—79. Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 279—281. Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 423.

into

into France; but his instructions were by no means decidedly hostile to Henry the Fourth. On the contrary, manifesting a disposition rather to conciliate, than to irritate; they breathed such a spirit as the father and head of the Christian church might dictate, without degrading or debasing his paternal character. [r] CHAP. I. 1589.

The united efforts of all the external enemies of the new king, were however weak and contemptible, compared with those made by Philip the Second. During the reign and life of Henry the Third, he had observed some degree of disguise, and imposed some restraint on his ambitious, or destructive projects. The alliance subsisting between the houses of Valois, and of Austria, cemented by the tyes of marriage; together with the undoubted attachment of Henry to the Catholic faith; — these motives induced the cabinet of Madrid to negociate in secret with the Guises, thereby avoiding an open rupture between the two crowns. But, when the sceptre devolved to a Hugonot, Philip instantly disdained all further concealment, or measures of reserve. The pretext of heresy, against which, throughout his whole life, he had declared unqualified hostility, formed too convenient a mask for veiling his ultimate views, not to avail himself of it without delay. He was besides, the hereditary enemy of the King of Navarre, whose antient patrimonial dominions he retained, in virtue of the original usurpation made by Ferdinand of

Philip the Second.

Measures of that monarch.

[r] Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 428.

CHAP. I.

Arragon. The vacancy of the French throne seemed to open to him no distant prospect, either of placing on it his daughter Clara Isabella, niece to the late King, or at least of reducing the monarchy to a state of complete subversion. Though he had already determined to take an open part in favor of "the League," to lavish his treasures, and even if requisite, to send his forces to combat Henry; yet, rendering his affected zeal or liberality altogether subservient to his policy, he attempted to constitute himself the protector and arbiter of Mayenne himself. Baffled in that design, he did not desist from his plans; but contenting himself with the title only of an auxiliary, he expected from the effect of time and favorable accidents, the completion of his ambitious projects. [s]

1589. His ambitious projects.

Grandeur and magnitude of the Spanish monarchy.

The enormous power of so great a monarch, appeared at first view to be almost irresistible, when joined to the other enemies of Henry the Fourth. Besides his numerous kingdoms and provinces scattered over Europe, the richest portions of Asia, Africa, and of the New World, belonged to Spain. Portugal, with her rich colonies, the discoveries made by Gama beyond the Cape of Good Hope, and the conquests effected by Albuquerque, from Ormus and Goa, to Malacca and Amboyna; — all had fallen into his hands, only a few years preceding, without a blow. His revenues seemed to

[s] Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 431. Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 285—289.

be

be as vast as his ambition, and as inexhaustible as his thirst of dominion. The veteran bands commanded by the Duke of Parma, which had nearly subjected the Netherlands, if once they were united to the forces of "the League," it might be presumed, would inevitably crush the army of a Prince as yet unsettled in the throne, and incapable of contending with so vast a disparity. The repulse sustained by Mayenne at Arques, could only be esteemed a short respite; and Europe, with anxious solicitude anticipated as neither doubtful nor remote, the final destruction of Henry.

CHAP. I. 1589.

But the Spanish greatness, which inspired such universal terror, if not ideal, was in a considerable degree exaggerated; Philip having himself, sapped its foundations, and precipitated its decline. The treasures of Peru and Mexico were dissipated in his expensive enterprizes, dictated by vengeance, bigotry, or ambition; to accomplish which, the wealth of both the Indies was found to be unequal. His subjects perceptibly diminished in numbers, while industry and manufactures sunk in a similar proportion. The late unfortunate expedition against England, where his invincible Armada had been shipwrecked or destroyed, broke his naval strength; while the long wars in the Low Countries, though they formed a soldiery of unequalled skill, yet drained his exchequer. He could only attack France, by exposing Flanders; and in venturing on the experiment, he gratified his resentment, at the expence of

Causes and principles of its decline.

CHAP. I. 1589.

his interests. He was besides declining in years, and hastening towards the termination of his long reign. His only son, born by the fourth marriage which he contracted, a minor, inexperienced, and of feeble capacity, might prove unequal to supporting the weight of so many sceptres. The veil which had concealed the weakness and diseases of the Spanish monarchy from general inspection, fell in fact with Philip the Second. Under his successor, that immense and disjointed fabrick faintly sustained the attacks made on it by foreign nations. Convulsed, diminished, and shaken to its very base, during the reign of Philip the Fourth; the united efforts of England, Germany, and Holland, could scarcely preserve it from complete subversion or extinction, under the languid administration of Charles the Second, last Prince of the Spanish branch of the house of Austria.

State of Spain, towards the close of Philip the Second's reign.

CHAP. II.

Battle of Ivry. — Victory of the King. — Consequences of it. — Henry marches to Paris. — Death of the Cardinal of Bourbon. — Siege of Paris. — Famine. — Causes which protracted its surrender. — March of the Duke of Parma into France. — Henry raises the siege. — Military operations on both sides. — Return of the Duke of Parma into Flanders. — Events in Brittany, and in Provence. — Death of Sixtus the Fifth. — Election of Gregory the Fourteenth. — Attack of St. Denis. — Siege of Chartres. — Political intrigues of the young Cardinal of Bourbon. — Edict of toleration, in favor of the Protestants. — Papal monitories, published against the King. — Situation of the Duke of Mayenne. — Hostilities. — Escape of the Duke of Guise from Tours. — Death of La Noue. — Enterprizes of the Duke of Savoy. — Arrival of the German auxiliaries. Death of Gregory the Fourteenth. — Transactions at Paris. — Violent proceedings of the council of sixteen. — Their punishment. — Act of oblivion published by the Duke of Mayenne.

CHAP. II. 1590.

WHILE the King, with almost unexampled celerity, in defiance of the rigors of winter, at the head of a victorious army, subjected nearly the whole tract of country lying between the Seine and the Loire; the Duke of Mayenne slowly prepared to take the field. Importuned by the clamours of the Parisians, he undertook to open the passages which prevented the entrance of provisions into the capital;

Siege of Meulan by Mayenne.

CHAP. II. 1590.

pital; and after reducing the castle of Vincennes, together with Pontoise, two places situated in the vicinity of the metropolis, he sat down before Meulan. The town, built on the river Seine, was rendered more important by a fort, constructed in an island which there divides the stream. Berengueville, the governor, far from being intimidated by the superiority of the enemy, repulsed them with loss; and by his desperate valor, added to his military skill, enabled the King to come in person to his relief. The army of "the League," in consequence of his approach, was compelled to desist from the enterprize; while Henry, satisfied with having frustrated their design, drew off his forces towards Dreux, of which place he immediately began the siege.[a]

March. The King raises the siege of Dreux.

Meanwhile, the Duke of Mayenne, who, in consequence of the pressing solicitations which he made to the Duke of Parma, had been joined by a considerable body of infantry and cavalry from Flanders, commanded by Count Egmont, directed his march towards Dreux. The garrison defended the city with an intrepidity and obstinacy, not inferior to that displayed at Meulan; and Henry, on receiving intelligence of the approach of the enemy, having withdrawn his artillery, decamped from before the place. In a council of war convoked for the purpose, the resolution was unanimously adopted to give battle to Mayenne. Many

[a] Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 432, 433. De Thou, vol. xi. p. 86—92. D'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 227.

reasons

reasons prompted the King to embrace so hazardous a measure, notwithstanding the inferiority of his numbers. It was in itself more analogous to the natural character of Henry, whose courage and ardor always impelled him to prefer the most decisive or generous resolutions. The valor, loyalty, and experience of the nobility and gentry, who constituted a large proportion of his troops, inspired him with confidence; and he was besides destitute of the pecuniary resources, indispensable for protracting a campaign, in presence of a superior adversary. Animated by these considerations, he did not hesitate to march towards Mayenne; and as it became requisite, in order to occupy an advantageous position, that he should turn his back for a short time on the army of "the "League," his motions, which were mistaken for an intention of flying, augmented their eagerness to bring him to a decisive engagement. [b]

CHAP. II.

1590.

He determines to give battle to the enemy.

This impatience was notwithstanding confined to the private soldiers or officers, and did not extend to their commander. The Duke, aware of the advantages possessed by the royalists, which more than counterbalanced his numerical superiority of troops, desired to avoid a general action. But, the disgrace of retiring before a smaller army, the importunity of the principal officers, and the contemptuous reproaches of Count Egmont, who threatened to

State of Mayenne's army.

[b] Davila, p. 891—893. Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 435, 436.

chastise

CHAP. II. 1590.

chastise the temerity of the enemy, with the Flemish auxiliaries under his own command; —these motives overcame Mayenne's reluctance. In the disposition made of his forces, the Viscount de Tavannes, from the imperfection of his sight, committed an error which was attended with very fatal consequences. Instead of leaving a sufficient space between the battalions of infantry, for allowing the cavalry to rally and return to the charge; he drew up the foot so close, as by impeding their own operations eventually to produce general confusion [c]. Marshal Tallard, by a similar defect of the organs of sight, which led him to mistake the enemy's troops for those of France, eminently conduced to produce the memorable defeat experienced by the armies of Louis the fourteenth, in the beginning of the last century, at Blenheim, where Tallard himself was taken prisoner.

Dispositions made by Henry.

On the contrary, never perhaps were the eminent military endowments of Henry, which had been exhibited at Coutras and at Arques, more conspicuously or successfully displayed, than at the battle of Ivry. His activity, which pervaded every part of the camp, left nothing to the direction of others, that it was possible to inspect in person. His heroic contempt of danger and death, was tempered by steady courage, while it was regulated by sentiments of the most elevated submission and resignation to the dispensations of Providence.

[c] Davila, p. 897—899. De Thou, vol. xi. p. 119, 120.

Biron ably supported his sovereign, in all the subordinate parts of duty, and the general ardor of the troops gave a happy presage of victory. CHAP. II. 1590.

At the first onset, the Walloon horse, led to the charge by Count Egmont, broke the royal cavalry opposed to them, and produced a temporary disorder; but being rudely charged in the rear, they were in turn routed, cut in pieces, and their commander killed on the spot. In the center, Henry, personally opposed to the Duke of Mayenne, contended for his crown; precisely as Richard the Third had done at Bosworth, against the Earl of Richmond, but with very different success. It is admitted, that Mayenne was by no means wanting to himself on this occasion; and that his defeat must chiefly be attributed to causes, which he could neither obviate nor surmount, by any exertions of valor or of skill. The German cavalry, unable to rally behind the battalions, in consequence of the original fault committed by Tavannes; was with difficulty prevented from totally disordering the main body, and became in a great measure useless during the remainder of the action. After a short, though obstinate conflict, the army of "the League" giving way, fled in every direction. Mayenne, accompanied with scarcely fifty followers, long maintained his ground, and endeavoured to restore the battle. But finding all attempts of that nature vain, he retreated with precipitation over the river Eure; causing the bridge to be broken down, in order to impede pursuit. 14th Mar. Battle of Ivry.

The

CHAP. II.

1590. Defeat of the army of "the League."

The Switzers, who formed a considerable part of his infantry, and who had not yet engaged, being surrounded by the victorious royalists, laid down their arms, and were allowed quarter. But the German horse, who had contributed so much to the defeat of their own forces; and who, after having been raised and levied in the empire, for the King's service, had entered into that of his adversaries; were severely punished for their breach of honor and fidelity. By Henry's order, they were attacked and put to the sword. The slaughter was very considerable, and accompanied with every mark of signal victory. Mayenne, not regarding himself as secure even in the town of Mantes, though at a great distance from the scene of action, withdrew on the following day, to St. Denis, in the vicinity of Paris. [d]

Inability of Henry to improve the victory.

It seems probable, that if the King had improved his advantage with celerity, and advanced without loss of time to the walls of that city; the impression made by his recent success, added to the unprepared state of the inhabitants, might have enabled him to become master of the metropolis. He was indeed strenuously exhorted to accelerate his march, by some of his most faithful and experienced captains, nor is it to be doubted that he felt the expediency of the advice. But, like his antagonist Mayenne, he had many factions existing in his own camp, and numerous opponents even among those indivi-

[d] Sully, vol. i. p. 72—74. D'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 228—233. De Thou, vol. xi. p. 124—129. Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 436—439. Davila, p. 896—907. Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 327—335.

duals

duals who maintained his cause. The Catholic lords and gentlemen, however loyal they might be, yet were not disposed, by elevating a Hugonot to the throne, at once to exterminate "the "League;" though their indignation excited by the assassination of Henry the Third, together with their reliance on the promises of his successor to embrace the Romish faith, induced them to support his title. Marshal Biron was accused of not desiring to terminate a war, which rendered him necessary to his sovereign; and the Marquis d'O, Superintendant of the finances, purposely refused or withheld the money indispensable for paying the foreign auxiliaries. Fifteen days having elapsed in consequence of these impediments, before the royal army beheld itself in a condition to prosecute the late victory; so critical a delay was improved by the enemy, who had recovered from their first consternation [e]. It was asserted with equal reason, that if the Duke of Mayenne had been able to throw a strong garrison into the town of Mantes, he might in a great measure have deprived Henry of every beneficial consequence arising from the success of his arms, and have incapacitated him from even approaching the capital. [f]

CHAP. II. 1590

Causes of it.

That commander, overcome with emotions of shame and concern at his defeat, remained during some days at St. Denis, unwilling to meet

Dejection of the Duke of Mayenne.

[e] Sully, vol. i. p. 76, 77. Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 343. Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 440, 441.

[f] Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 440.

the

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the reproaches of the Parisians, or to expose himself to their resentment. But, the exhortations of his sister the Duchess of Montpensier, the consolatory admonition of the Papal Legate, who having arrived in the metropolis, had embraced the interests of "the League;" sustained by the promises of Mendoza, the Spanish embassador, soon roused him to new exertions. It appearing evident that Paris would speedily be invested by the royal forces, and that unless succoured by a foreign power, the city could not ultimately be preserved from falling into the hands of the King; a determination was embraced of deputing the Duke of Mayenne in person to the court of Brussels, in order to demand assistance. During his absence, his maternal brother, the Duke of Nemours, a prince collaterally descended from the ducal house of Savoy, was constituted governor of the metropolis. The inhabitants themselves, far from exhibiting any marks of apprehension at the late adverse occurrences, or displaying a desire to deprecate the approaching calamities of a siege; professed a readiness to undergo every renunciation, and even to suffer death itself, rather than submit to a heretic, excommunicated by the Holy See. Encouraged by so many proofs of constancy and adherence among his followers, Mayenne instantly set out for Flanders: while Nemours, a prince who though only in the flower of youth, exhibited the talents and resources of riper age, lost not a moment in constructing, or in repairing the forti-

Resolution of the Parisians.

fortifications of Paris. The short period of time which remained before Henry's approach, precluded him notwithstanding, from taking those steps for procuring a supply of provisions, without which it appeared to be impossible that he could make a long, or effectual resistance. [g]

1590.

28th Mar. Henry approaches the capital.

During these transactions, the royal army advancing along the course of the Seine, made themselves masters of almost all the towns and fortresses, which command the passage of that river, as well as of the Yonne, and the Marne. Henry, desirous rather to reduce Paris by famine, than to enter it by storm, began by cutting off the only sources, from which they could obtain subsistence. Anxious to gain a short interval, and if possible to obtain a cessation of arms, in order to allow time for the Duke of Mayenne's return; Gaëtano, the Legate, opened a fallacious negotiation with Marshal Biron, for the accomplishment of peace. But the King, aware of the insidious intention of the chiefs of "the League," and regarding the reduction of Paris as neither distant nor doubtful, refused to suspend the progress of his arms. From every part of France, intelligence of the most prosperous nature was received in his camp. In the central province of Auvergne, his adherents gained a signal victory over the enemy, at the town of Issoire, on the same day when he had vanquished the army of Mayenne at Ivry. Some advantages

He refuses to grant a suspension of arms.

[g] Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 344.

of

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of inferior consequence were obtained in other provinces, while on all sides, his affairs seemed to be hastening to a speedy and fortunate termination. [h]

Death of the Cardinal of Bourbon. 9th May.

The embarrassments under which the Duke of Mayenne laboured, already sufficiently numerous, were further augmented by an event which took place at this period. The Cardinal of Bourbon, whose name had hitherto served to contain within bounds the various pretenders to the crown, expired at the castle of Fontenay in Poitou, oppressed under the load of age and infirmities. Philip the Second, who beheld the throne vacant, and the head of "the League" reduced as a suppliant, to demand the assistance of Spain, in order to save himself and his party from total ruin; becoming from that instant the arbiter of both, might dictate the conditions on which he would consent to march his forces into France. It even required the utmost address in Mayenne, to protract for a short time the decision on a point of such delicacy and magnitude, as the election of a sovereign. A convocation of the States General being indispensable for the purpose, he promised to assemble them without delay; retaining during the intermediate time, in virtue of his office, the prerogatives attached to the monarchical dignity. The college of the Sorbonne, devoted to "the League," whose

Consequences of that event.

[h] Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 345, and p. 347—354. Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 439, and p. 441. De Thou, vol. xi. p. 134—142, and p. 149—152.

decrees

decrees on matters of conscience, as well as of theology, were regarded with profound veneration by all the adherents of that faction; had not waited for the Cardinal's decease, to anticipate its apprehended effects. In a meeting expressly held for the object, they solemnly determined, that even in the event of his death, Henry of Bourbon remained equally incapable of ever succeeding to the throne, on account of his heresy and apostacy. Those who should adhere to him or favor his cause, were stigmatized as deserters of religion, and enemies of God; while the crown of martyrdom was asserted to be reserved for such as opposed his pretensions, and sacrificed their lives for the holy union. [i]

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Decree of the Sorbonne.

Meanwhile Paris, completely invested on every side, began to experience the calamities inseparable from a state of siege. It may be considered as one of the most memorable recorded in modern history, and vies in extent of sufferings sustained by the besieged, with any of those commemorated in antiquity. Every circumstance respecting it, as being strongly characteristic of the age, attracts attention. The inhabitants appear to have exceeded two hundred thousand, independant of the garrison; which, in cavalry and infantry, composed of Germans and Switzers, as well as French, fell short of four thousand in number [k]. The subsistence and provisions of every nature, were exceedingly inadequate to the wants of so vast

Siege of Paris.

State of the capital.

[i] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 154—159. Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 356—359. Mezerai, vol. ix. p. 446, 447.

[k] Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 443.

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a multitude; and at the moderate allowance of only a pound of bread daily to each individual, could not last above the short period of a month[l]. No timely or judicious precautions had been adopted, either for expelling the useless and feeble of both sexes, or for providing magazines to nourish them during the siege. Their hopes of speedy succour from the Duke of Mayenne, their enmity to the King, and their enthusiasm in the support of the Catholic religion, supplied however the place of all other requisites. As the siege advanced, every species of sustenance became more scarce; and after devouring all the animals found in the place, they recurred to the vilest, and most loathsome aliments. It impresses with horror, while it strikingly displays the inflexible constancy of the people, that at the suggestion of the Spanish embassador, recourse was had to the churchyards, and the ashes of the dead were disturbed, to furnish a noxious substitute for food. A species of paste, composed of human bones reduced to powder, and afterwards mixed with water, was administered in order to assuage the pangs of hunger: but, far from prolonging, it only shortened the existence of those persons who ventured to taste of so unnatural and detestable a mixture[m]. The grass which grew in the deserted streets of the suburbs, was voraciously devoured by the miserable wretches,

Famine.

Expedients to prevent its progress.

[l] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 162.

[m] Esprit de la Ligue, vol. iii. p. 142. De Thou, vol. xi. p. 176, 177. Davila, p. 937, and p. 946. Satyre Menippee, vol. i. p. 418, 419.

who

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who strove by every means to perpetuate their being. These baneful or ineffectual experiments, even though they might prolong life, could not prevent the rapid progress of disease; more than twelve thousand persons having perished during the siege, either of inanition, or in consequence of the pernicious nourishment which they were reduced to adopt from necessity. [n]

June. Duke of Mayenne enters France.

After some weeks passed in solicitation at Brussels, the Duke of Mayenne having, not without difficulty, obtained a body of Spanish and Walloon infantry, from the governor of the Low Countries, re-entered France, accompanied by his new auxiliaries. Henry, apprized of his march, determined to attack him before he approached the capital. Quitting therefore his camp, at the head of more than two thousand cavalry, he advanced with such rapidity, that the enemy had scarcely time to take refuge under the cannon of the city of Läon in Picardy. The position being however too strong to admit of being forced, and the Duke declining to hazard an action, though superior in numbers; the King returning with the same dispatch, resumed his station before Paris. We have seen Bonaparte compelled in the same manner to abandon the attempt of attacking Blucher, when occupying the heights of Läon, only a few days before the Allies entered Paris, and terminated the tyrant's sanguinary career.

9th June. Desperate condition of Paris.

During Henry's absence, though a slender supply of provisions had been thrown into the place, yet as it proved wholly inadequate to

[n] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 176, 177.

CHAP. II. 1590. the augmenting exigency of the inhabitants, every circumstance appeared to preclude hope, and to prove the impossibility of protracting the siege. The troops, conducted by Mayenne from Flanders, were unequal to making any vigorous effort for their extrication; and the Duke of Parma manifested no disposition to quit the Netherlands, where Maurice, Prince of Orange, who menaced various places, only waited for his departure, to overrun the pro-
July. vinces lying along the Maese and the Issel. On the other hand, the royal army was reinforced from every quarter; the expectation of pillage, and of the certain reduction of the metropolis, alluring adventurers who crouded to the King's standard. St. Denis, together with almost all the other fortresses or posts in the vicinity of
Capture of the suburbs. Paris, were successively taken; and the suburbs, which being fortified by entrenchments, had hitherto resisted, were carried in a single night not only with facility, but almost without opposition. Henry rejecting their proposals for a suspension of hostilities, though he offered them an honourable capitulation; alarming symptoms of internal confusion had already appeared, which menaced open insurrection, and were not quelled without having recourse to the most violent expedients. Time, vigilance, and perseverance seemed to be alone demanded, for compelling the Parisians to implore the clemency of their conqueror. °

° De Thou, vol. xi. p. 167, 168, and p. 175—178. Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 371—376.

Many

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1590. Auguſt.

Many causes contributed nevertheless, to avert the impending danger, and finally to extricate them from their perilous situation. The Duke of Nemours exerted not only an invincible courage, but manifested a vast variety of resources, scarcely to have been expected from a prince of his youth and inexperience. The fertile invention, aided by the unconquerable spirit of the Duchess of Montpensier, fabricated with unceasing care, fictitious intelligence of the Duke of Parma's approach and arrival. Every renunciation and hardship to which the inhabitants submitted, were shared by the Papal Legate, and by the embassador of Philip the Second, Mendoza. While the former dispensed pardon or absolution to the infatuated multitude, and promised the crown of martyrdom to such as fell in defence of the faith; the latter distributed largesses of money, provisions, and assurances of speedy relief[p]. All the arts, by which a furious and bigotted people can be stimulated to support famine, were successfully practised. Their zeal was inflamed by declamations made from the pulpit; their imaginations were raised by promises of divine, or supernatural assistance; and their senses entertained with processions, in which the religious orders, grotesquely habited, marched through the principal streets of the city.[q]

Causes which protracted the siege.

Arts, used to sustain the people.

[p] Memoires de Villeroy, vol. ii. Discours veritable du Siege de Paris, p. 413—522, passim.

[q] Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 360, 361. Satyre Menip. vol. i. p. 328—330.

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1590. External assistance and support.

Powerfully as these engines operated in their effect on the mind, they must still have proved unequal to repressing hunger, and retaining the populace in submission, if they had not been aided by external means. Provisions of many kinds were permitted to enter Paris, during the course of the siege. Givry, who commanded at Charenton, an important post, situated at the spot in which the river Marne falls into the Seine; tempted by an offer of five thousand crowns, and influenced by sentiments of gallantry towards his mistress, who was shut up in the capital; allowed a large convoy of corn and wine to be received into the place [r]. Sentiments of humanity operating strongly on the besiegers themselves, induced them to admit or administer relief to their distressed and expiring countrymen. Towards the termination of the siege, a regular intercourse might be said to subsist between the inhabitants and the royal troops. Every article of luxury or commerce which Paris contained, was bartered for bread or wine; the Parisians thus purchasing from their enemies, the means of their own eventual preservation [s]. Even the King himself became highly instrumental to prolonging the duration of their resistance. The benignity of his nature, which melted at their sufferings, relaxed the severity of his vigilance. Secure, as he imagined, that the Duke of Parma would not, or could not abandon the Netherlands, in order

Benignity of Henry.

[r] Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 442, 443.

[s] Sully, vol. i. p. 78. D'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 234—236.

to come to the relief of Paris; he trusted with too much confidence, to the slow effect of time and famine. He might likewise have accelerated the reduction, by using force, but he pertinaciously refused to have recourse to violent methods. If he had entered the city by storm, he dreaded the complete destruction of his own capital; and he justly apprehended the severe revenge, which the Hugonots in his army would probably have taken, for the massacre of St. Bartholomew. Feeling a greater interest than any other individual, in the conservation of the metropolis and the inhabitants; he did not wish to take possession of it, reduced to a heap of smoking ruins, desolated by a licentious, ungovernable soldiery. [t]

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Policy of that prince.

In compliance with the reiterated and peremptory injunctions of the court of Madrid, meanwhile the Duke of Parma at length prepared to begin his march towards Paris. That general, who had succeeded to Don John of Austria in the supreme command of the Netherlands, civil and military; had reduced to the obedience of Philip, in the course of twelve years, a great portion of those revolted provinces. His reputation for skill and capacity in war, which exceeded that of any captain of the age, equalled him in some degree with the most illustrious names of antiquity; and will transmit him to the latest posterity with those

Duke of Parma prepares to invade France.

[t] Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 371. De Thou, vol. xi. p. 175, and p. 183. Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 462, 463. Memoires de Villeroy, vol. ii. p. 533, 534.

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of Condé and Turenne; of Marlborough and of Wellington. Covered with glory, and elevated to the summit of fame, he did not desire to commit so well-earned, but precarious a possession, to the hazards of the field, or to the caprice of accident. Averse to undertake an expedition, which could only be prosecuted at the expence and risk of the Low Countries; he reluctantly quitted the scene of his victories, to plunge into another kingdom with which he was locally unacquainted; the manners of whose inhabitants were peculiarly incompatible with those of the Spaniards [u]. His march was conducted on scientific principles of Tactics, little known or practised among European nations in the sixteenth century. Advancing by fixed and regular stages, in close and compact order, always ready for action, and encamping every night, according to the Roman system of war, he left nothing to fortune. Conscious that in the person of Henry the Fourth, he had an enemy to oppose, of equal activity, vigilance, and intrepidity; he proceeded with the utmost caution, and could not be induced to accelerate his progress, by any entreaties of the Duke of Mayenne. Having traversed all Picardy, unopposed, at the head of about twelve thousand infantry, and more than three thousand horse; arriving on the banks of the Marne, he effected his junction with the army of "the

6th Aug.

Precautions adopted by that commander.

His junction with Mayenne. 26th Aug.

[u] Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 376. Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 464. Davila, p. 931, and p. 944.

"League,"

"League," near the city of Meaux, only twelve leagues from Paris. [x] CHAP. II.

1590. Consternation in the royal camp.

The amazement excited in the royal camp by this intelligence, was, if possible, exceeded by the consternation which it there occasioned. Henry beheld the object for which he had made such exertions, at the instant when it seemed ready to fall into his hands, snatched from him by foreign interposition. He was well aware how dangerous it might prove, in face of the ablest commander in Europe, to attempt the prosecution of the siege; and the fatal obstinacy of Francis the First, who persisted in besieging Pavia under similar circumstances, was not yet obliterated by the lapse of more than sixty years. On the other hand, to renounce the capture of Paris, whose inhabitants, he was well assured, could not resist above four days longer, was a cruel and mortifying sacrifice. After mature deliberation, it became notwithstanding indispensable to embrace without delay the latter painful alternative. Yielding therefore to necessity, the King broke up his camp, and advanced towards the Spaniards, followed by his forces, which exceeded eighteen thousand foot, and five thousand cavalry. His expectation of deciding the contest by a general engagement, which consoled him in some measure for his recent disappointment, excited universal ardor among the royal troops.

30th Aug. Siege of Paris, raised.

[x] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 183, 184. Davila, p. 947—949. D'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 237.

The

CHAP. II.

1590. 1st Sept.

The two armies soon came in sight, at the village of Chelles: but the Duke of Parma, far from exhibiting a disposition to try the event of a battle, having instantly commanded his soldiers to entrench themselves, declined the action offered him by Henry. That Prince vainly attempted to shake his resolution, by sending a herald to defy the Spanish commander. The Duke, with phlegmatic composure not unmixed with dignity, replied, that "he was not come "so far, to take advice of his enemy, at what "moment he should give battle; that he had "entered France, by command of the Catho-"lic King his sovereign, in order to extirpate "heresy; and that he would fulfil his commis-"sion, by such measures of whatever nature, "as appeared to him best adapted to the "purpose." [y]

Duke of Parma declines an action.

His actions, which corresponded with his assertions, displayed his unquestionable superiority to Henry in the science of war. While, with uncommon dexterity, he contrived to amuse the King by the appearance of meditating an immediate engagement, he turned short towards Lagny, a town situated on the Marne, in which was placed a royal garrison. Having instantly thrown a bridge across the river, he began to batter the wall without intermission, effected a breach, and entered the place by storm, before any effectual succours could be sent to its assistance. The capture of so im-

He takes Lagny.

[y] Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 378, 379. De Thou, vol. xi. p. 186—188. Davila, p. 952.

portant

portant a post, by compleating the deliverance of Paris, facilitated the introduction of every species of provisions, from which the inhabitants had been debarred during above four months[z]. It seemed scarcely possible to undergo a more sudden and humiliating reverse, than the successful efforts of the Spanish general had produced in Henry's affairs. No hope remained, either of reducing the metropolis to surrender, or of forcing the enemy to hazard a battle. The jealousies and animosities existing between the Catholic and Hugonot officers, which had been suspended or forgotten during the siege, revived under circumstances of depression. As it even became difficult to secure the convoys of provisions, which were continually intercepted by the Duke of Nemours, now liberated from his late confinement, scarcity began to be experienced in the royal camp. The troops, diminished by diseases, were likewise broken by fatigue: while the nobility, no longer stimulated by the prospect of honor or of plunder, could scarcely be retained under the standard, and demanded permission to retire from the field, in order to recruit their exhausted strength.[a]

CHAP. II. 1590.

State of the royal forces.

Submitting with fortitude, to an act of necessity which had now become unavoidable, the King determined therefore spontaneously to grant the permission, which it would have

Henry disbands his army.

[z] Davila, p. 953—957. Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 465, 466. Sully, vol. i. p. 78. D'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 238—240.

[a] Davila, p. 957. Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 379. Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 466.

been

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been impossible to withhold or refuse, under his present altered circumstances. Previous to disbanding his forces, prompted by indignation and despair, he made nevertheless two attempts to surprize the metropolis, both of which proved unsuccessful[b]. No measure remained, except by a speedy retreat, to reserve himself for a more propitious juncture. After having provided with garrisons, the principal places in the vicinity of Paris, and sent detachments into various provinces; accompanied by his few remaining troops, he marched to Clermont en Beauvoisis, which town he carried by storm. Scarcely eight hundred cavalry, out of so flourishing and numerous an assemblage of soldiers, remained for the protection of his own person[c]; a circumstance which strongly depictures the nature and composition of the French military force in that age, when Philip the Second alone, of all the European powers, constantly kept on foot a regular army.

Operations of the combined generals.

The Dukes of Parma and of Mayenne, no longer fettered in their movements by the presence of an enemy in the field, instantly breaking up their camp, meditated further acquisitions. Corbeil, a town which from its position on the Seine above Paris, contributed eminently to incommode and distress the capital, was invested by their joint forces. Though destitute either of a considerable garrison, or of the means of making a long defence, yet the valor

[b] Memoires de Villeroy, vol. ii. p. 483—490.

[c] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 191, and p. 193. Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 467. Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 380—382. D'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 240, 241. Davila, p. 957—961.

of

of Rigaud the governor, detained the two confederates near a month under its walls. The mutual distrust of the French and Spanish commanders, which began likewise to appear in every operation, impeded or weakened their progress. Mayenne having refused to entrust Corbeil, when captured, to the care of foreign soldiers; the Duke of Parma on his part, satisfied with having fulfilled the principal object of his expedition, by the deliverance of Paris which he had effected, warmly expressed his impatience to return into Flanders. Diseases, the result of intemperance, when added to the autumnal season, and the want of numerous articles requisite for continuing the campaign, had already diminished his troops. The court of Madrid, he likewise well knew, intended rather to feed, than to terminate the war; "the League" being not yet sufficiently weakened or humbled, to accept a sovereign from the hand of Philip the Second. Farnese's absence from the Low Countries, had besides already proved highly injurious to the interests of Spain. In addition to the city of Breda, which covered the province of Brabant, surprized by Maurice, Prince of Orange; that general captured the important fortresses of Zutphen, Deventer, and Nimeguen. The Spaniards thus expelled from Overyssel, scarcely retained any places of consequence belonging to Holland, north of the Rhine, the Waäl, and the Maese. [d]

Impediments to their progress.

[d] Davila, p. 962—965. D'Aub. vol. iii. p. 241, 242. De Thou, vol. xi. p. 196—198. Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 382, and p. 386.

Impelled

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1590. Retreat of Parma into Flanders.

Impelled by these considerations, Farnese, notwithstanding the remonstrances of Mayenne against his departure, prepared to revisit the Netherlands; and having opened a secret negotiation with the governor of Chateau Thierry on the Marne, of which important place he hoped by corruption to render himself master, he bent his course through Champagne, with a

4th Nov.

view of facilitating the object. Henry, whose vigilance made him attentive to every operation of the enemy, immediately put himself in motion, at the head of near eight hundred cavalry. After providing against any act of treachery which might be meditated, by sending La Noue, one of his most able and faithful commanders, with orders to take charge of Chateau Thierry; he lost not a moment in endeavouring to harrass and impede the Duke of

Followed by the King.

Parma's return. Aided by the Baron of Biron, son to the Marshal of that name, whose criminal ambition rendered him too celebrated at a subsequent period of Henry's reign; he hung on the flanks of the Spanish army, cut to pieces some straggling troops, and repeatedly attempted to surprize, or to put to the sword a part of the rear, which was most exposed to at-

29th Nov.

tack[c]. But, such was the discipline, as well as the admirable order observed by the retiring forces; and so superior was the military science exhibited by their general, that the King could obtain no advantage of consequence. Near eight thousand auxiliaries were left be-

[c] Memoires de Villeroy, vol. ii. p. 528—530.

hind

hind by the Duke of Parma, to support the party of "the League;" pecuniary funds being provided for supplying their wants, as well as for sustaining the common cause. Yet even before the Spaniards quitted France, they had the mortification to see Lagny and Corbeil, the only towns which they had reduced, retaken by Givry almost without resistance. Corbie, a post of importance on the river Somme, not far removed from the frontiers of Artois, was nearly at the same time surprized by Humieres, one of the royal commanders; and Henry returning from his pursuit of the enemy, whom he followed to the borders of his dominions, entered St. Quintin in triumph [f]. A short period of repose and inaction, mutually succeeded to the events of so crouded, as well as interesting a campaign.

CHAP. II. 1590.

Surprize of Corbie.

While Henry thus experienced in their utmost force, the rapid vicissitudes of fortune, the kingdom became agitated and desolated by the adherents of the two parties. Matignon, who was steadily attached to the interests of the crown, retained in submission the province of Guyenne, together with Bourdeaux, its capital. Languedoc likewise enjoyed a similar degree of tranquillity under the protection of Montmorency: but in Brittany, a portion of France peculiarly exposed to foreign invasion, from its position stretching into the Atlantic; the turbulent ambition of the Duke of Mercœur, a Prince of the house of Lor-

State of France.

[f] Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 388, 389. Sully, vol. i. p. 79. Davila, p. 967—969. De Thou, vol. xi. p. 204—206.

rain,

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rain, brother to the Queen-dowager Louisa of Vaudemont, produced the greatest calamities. Desirous of erecting the duchy of Brittany into an independent sovereignty for himself; as it had been before its incorporation with the French monarchy under Charles the Eighth; and unable by his own force, or by the aid of "the League," to atchieve so arduous a work, he called in the assistance of foreigners. Philip the Second, always ready to aid the efforts of rebellion, in order ultimately to reduce France to the necessity of imploring his interposition and protection; having dispatched John d'Aquila, with four thousand soldiers, he landed at the port of Blavet, not far from Quiberon bay. The junction of so considerable a body, giving Mercœur a temporary superiority over the royal troops, enabled him to obtain some important advantages in that quarter of France.[g]

Spaniards sent into Brittany. October.

Progress of the Duke of Savoy, in Provence.

At the other extremity of the kingdom, Charles Emanuel, Duke of Savoy, aided by the same monarch, who not only furnished him with gallies for transporting his troops, but permitted him to levy forces in the Milanese; invaded Provence. La Valette, brother of Epernon, who commanded the royalists, being supported by Lesdigueieres at the head of the Protestants from Dauphiné; encountered the Savoyards, and repulsed or defeated them on various occasions. But the Duke availing himself of the political or religious divisions subsisting in the

[g] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 206—214. Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 402. Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 469.

province,

province, and possessing the means of corruption, with which Philip supplied him, did not less succeed in effecting his object. A deputation sent from the parliament and inhabitants of Aix, having invited him to repair to that capital, he obeyed the summons with alacrity. His reception, accompanied with every testimony of general joy, was followed by his solemn recognition as protector and governor-general of Provence under the crown of France[h]. Only irresolution, and his want of a sufficient military force, prevented him from profiting of the affection of the inhabitants of Marseilles, who seemed ready to surrender to the Duke, that flourishing commercial city.

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While France, desolated by foreign and by domestic enemies, from the shores of the Mediterranean, to the distant coasts of the British channel, presented a scene of universal carnage and insurrection; the short, but memorable pontificate of Sixtus the Fifth, drew to its termination. His death, which took place nearly at the period when the King was necessitated to raise the siege of Paris, proved highly injurious to the royal cause. Neither terrified by the menaces of the Spanish embassador at the court of Rome, nor mollified by the entreaties of the Duke of Mayenne, Sixtus shewed a disposition to favor Henry the Fourth. His natural discernment, aided by the elevation of his mind, enabled him to perceive, and in-

Death of Sixtus the Fifth. 27th Aug.

[h] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 216—223. Chron. Nov vol. i. p. 400, 401. Vie de Lesdiguieres, folio, a Paris, 1638, p. 97—112.

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duced him to admire, the great qualities of that monarch. He had conceived an equally disadvantageous impression of the character and talents of the chief of "the League;" while his avarice rendered him averse to dissipating or diminishing the treasures, which he had deposited in the castle of St. Angelo. Induced by these motives, he exhibited the most unequivocal demonstrations of regard for the King; admitted to an audience, the Duke of Luxembourg, sent as deputy from the Catholic nobility of France; and enjoined the Legate to adopt conciliatory measures, for reconciling Henry to the Romish church.[i]

1590. His disinclination to "the League."

Sixtus's decease became productive of a total change in the conduct and policy of the Holy See. After the short pontificate of Urban the Seventh, which lasted only a few days, Sfondrati, a native of the duchy of Milan, and a subject of the Catholic King, was raised to the papal dignity. He assumed the name of Gregory the Fourteenth. Destitute either of the talents, firmness, or independence of Sixtus, the new Pope suffered himself to be made the tame and passive instrument of Spanish ambition. Having given immediate directions for levying a considerable body of troops, intended to be sent to the assistance of Mayenne, he destined the treasures accumulated by his predecessor, for their maintenance and support.[k]

5th Dec. Conduct of Gregory the Fourteenth.

[i] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 99—103, and p. 262. Chron. Nov. vol. iii. p. 395, 396.

[k] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 274—287.

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It may be confidently asserted, that the transactions which took place in France, between the death of Henry the Third, and the termination of the succeeding year, including a space of seventeen months; are more striking, crouded, and picturesque, than those contained within any similar period, in the modern history of Europe, anterior to the memorable era of the French Revolution. The retreat of the new king into Normandy pursued by the Duke of Mayenne, to the shore of the British Channel; his critical, and almost hopeless condition, before the combat of Arques; the fortunate issue of the contest on that occasion; Henry's re-appearance before Paris, at the head of a victorious army; the rapidity of his subsequent motions and conquests; the great battle of Ivry, followed by the siege of the capital; and its unexpected deliverance effected by a foreign interposition, at the moment when its capture appeared to be imminent or inevitable; — these events, in themselves of the first magnitude and interest, follow in such rapid succession, as powerfully to arrest attention. The remainder of the civil wars that took place under Henry the Fourth, though from a variety of causes and accidents, they were protracted to a very considerable length, yet become comparatively tame and insipid in the narration. Instructed by two defeats, the Duke of Mayenne never ventured on a third similar experiment, avoiding with his utmost care a decisive engagement. The Duke of Parma, already elevated to the pinnacle of military fame, and only de-

Interesting nature of the events of the civil war, down to this period.

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1590. sirous to fulfil the injunctions of Philip the Second, by sustaining "the League;" felt no temptation to commit to the chance of arms, the high reputation acquired by a life of successful exertion. Henry, on the other hand, though he made various attempts to become master of Paris by stratagem, or by negotiation, was never again able formally to invest and to besiege the metropolis. A degree of mutual languor and debility, the natural consequence of such violent efforts, began to manifest itself on both sides. Pecuniary resources were likewise wanting, and even men could no longer be procured without difficulty. The armies of "the League," principally composed of Spaniards and Italians, were maintained from the pontifical treasury, or paid by the Catholic King. Henry the Fourth continued to derive contributions, as well as to recruit his forces, from England, Holland, and the Protestant princes of the German empire: while Switzerland, more sensible to interest, than to glory or to religion, equally sold her stipendiaries to the two contending parties.

1591. Attempt upon St. Denis.

The Parisians did not long continue tranquil within their walls, after the retreat of the Duke of Parma. Rendered enterprizing by their late deliverance, they undertook to surprize the town of St. Denis, which, from its vicinity to the metropolis, greatly incommoded the inhabitants. A body of infantry, supported by a small number of horse, favored by the rigor of the season, which rendered the moat passable even for cavalry, ventured to approach the place.

2d Jan.

They

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They were conducted by the Chevalier d'Aumale, a Prince of the house of Lorrain, whose ardent and fearless character seemed peculiarly adapted to that species of hostility. The darkness of the night aiding the assailants, they entered the town without resistance, and were already become masters of it; when the governor, animated rather by despair, and desirous not to survive its loss, than inspired with any hopes of repulsing the enemy, sallied out and attacked them. Only seven gentlemen, mounted like himself, on horseback, accompanied him; but the obscurity and confusion magnifying his force, the enemy was disconcerted. While the Chevalier d'Aumale endeavoured to rally his troops, he received a mortal wound in the throat; and his followers no longer knowing whom to obey, fled with precipitation. St. Denis, recovered with the same rapidity that it had been captured, was secured against similar attempts. [k]

Death of the Chevalier d'Aumale.

The King, on the other hand, proved equally unsuccessful in an enterprize, the object of which was no less than to surprize Paris itself. Having afterwards assembled his forces, he joined Marshal Biron under the walls of Chartres, to which place he instantly laid siege. The valor of the garrison, sustained by the ardor of the inhabitants, whose bigotry inflamed their animosity, and the strength of the city itself, produced so long and obstinate a resistance, that Henry repeatedly manifested an intention of

11th Feb. Siege of Chartres.

[k] Davila, p. 987, 988. Chron. Nov. vol. ii. p. 405, 406. De Thou, vol. xi. p. 337—339.

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1591. 18th April. Capture of that city.

desisting from the enterprize. Success nevertheless ultimately crowned his attempt, the Duke of Mayenne not judging it safe to hazard a battle for its preservation. In order to retrieve the disgrace, and to recover the lustre of his arms, that General sat down before Chateau Thierry on the Marne, which speedily capitulated, rather by the treachery of the governor, than from his inability to protract the defence. The war notwithstanding languished on both sides; while each party, in expectation of speedy foreign assistance, suspended any great exertion, and even recommenced an illusory negotiation for peace.[1]

Discontent in the royal army.

Notwithstanding the victories which had hitherto almost uniformly accompanied the arms of Henry, sustained by the many great endowments, as well as virtues, displayed in his public conduct; discontent pervaded the royal camp, and menaced him with the most serious misfortunes. He had not yet accomplished the solemn assurance given at his elevation to the throne, of causing himself to be instructed in the Catholic doctrines; a promise, which more than any other motive, had induced the French nobility to recognize, and to support his title. He had indeed scrupulously maintained the ecclesiastical establishment, excluded the Hugonots from public employment, and conducted himself with equal moderation and wisdom, in his management of the two parties. But in an age so bigotted, his unequivocal renunciation

[1] Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 476—478. De Thou, vol. xi. p. 346, 347, and p. 352—355. Davila, p. 997—1003.

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of the Protestant faith, followed by the resumption of the Romish religion; — these sacrifices alone could confirm the crown on his head, and allay the scruples of the nation. Ambition, under the mask of zeal, might moreover avail itself of his delay, in order to produce new convulsions. Henry already beheld himself threatened with a competitor, even among the individuals of his own family, in the person of the young Cardinal of Bourbon. He was only the second in order of birth, of the three sons of Louis, Prince of Condé, by his second marriage with Eleanor de Roye: but, as his elder brother, Francis, Prince of Conti, laboured under various intellectual and bodily infirmities, which, it was believed, would incapacitate him for perpetuating his line; the Cardinal aspired to occupy the place left vacant by the death of his relative, the late Cardinal of Bourbon. Animated by so flattering an expectation, he began to form a cabal, composed of the most ardent or discontented Catholics; and desirous to engage in his interests the Papal court, he secretly dispatched an emissary to Rome, empowered to lay his claims before Gregory the Fourteenth. The intrigue did not indeed remain long concealed, Henry having received intimation of it from several quarters. As it might, nevertheless, prove dangerous to punish the offence committed by a person so nearly allied to him, he contented himself with summoning the Cardinal to attend him at Mantes, to which city he had previously removed the council of state. The King's presence and

Intrigues of the young Cardinal of Bourbon.

Repressed by the King's vigilance.

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vigilance suppressed for a time, if they did not altogether extinguish, the project; but the very existence of such a design, sufficiently manifested the peril inseparable from his adherence to the Hugonot religion. [m]

Necessity of Henry's abjuration.

When we consider the enlargement of Henry's mind, as well as the perspicuity of his judgment, we cannot reasonably doubt, that he had fully appreciated the delicate situation in which he stood; and that he had long foreseen the necessity of ultimately sacrificing his profession of faith, to the interests of the state, and the preservation of the monarchy. Destitute of bigotry, though sincere in his adherence to the tenets of the Reformers; he was probably withheld from abjuring them, more by motives of honor, decorum, and even prudence, than by scruples of a conscientious nature. Some of the most virtuous, disinterested, and upright of the Hugonots themselves, did not hesitate to admit, and to avow the necessity of his adopting the religion of the people, over whom he was called to reign by Providence [n]. But, however clear the ultimate propriety of such a step, might appear, many and weighty reasons impelled him to postpone its accomplishment, to a more favourable juncture. He stood in want equally of troops, and of pecuniary resources for their future support, at a moment when "the League" was about to receive ample sup-

Reasons for its delay.

[m] Davila, p. 1005—1008. De Thou, vol. xi. p. 349—352, and p. 363. Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 477, 478.

[n] Davila, p. 1009.

plies

plies of both descriptions. The Viscount of Turenne had, it is true, levied in the dominions of the Protestant Princes of the German empire, a body of ten thousand infantry, and above five thousand cavalry, which forces were preparing to advance to his aid[o]. But they had peremptorily refused even to begin their march, before they should have received payment of three hundred thousand Ducats; and the King relied altogether on Elizabeth, Queen of England, for furnishing him with so considerable a sum[p]. That Princess, it was incontestable, would instantly withhold her assistance, and probably renounce his alliance, if he embraced the Catholic religion. Nor could he hope by adopting such a measure, to disarm "the League;" whose leaders, corrupted by the gold of Spain, implacable in their animosity, and regarding even his abjuration of heresy as incomplete or nugatory, till he should have been formally absolved by the Pope, from his state of excommunication; would, as he well knew, never consent to recognize him for their rightful sovereign.

His position, with respect to the Protestant powers.

Far from judging the time proper for his assumption of the Romish faith and worship, the King ventured on a measure, calculated at once to extend security and protection to his Hugonot subjects. They had participated in all his adverse fortune, but hitherto had derived scarcely any advantages from his elevation to

Edict, issued in favour of the Hugonots.

[o] Chron. Nov. vol. ii. p. 438.
[p] Davila, p. 1023, 1024.

the

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the crown. The very toleration of their religion, formed only a perpetual infraction of the laws; and even their personal safety demanded some interposition, to secure them from violence. Moved by these considerations, Henry, in a convocation of the princes, nobility, and ecclesiastics held at Mantes, proposed to rescind the persecuting edicts, extorted by the heads of "the League" from his predecessor; renewing at the same time, that of Poitiers, issued in 1577, by Henry the Third. He expatiated with eloquence and energy, on the beneficial consequences which had resulted from the promulgation of so mild and tolerant an edict, which the late king had not consented to violate without the utmost repugnance. The Cardinal of Bourbon alone, among all the prelates assembled who were present at the King's address, ventured, not however without marks of irresolution and hesitation, to oppose the measure. But, his feeble and unsupported voice proved ineffectual to suspend a determination, the utility, as well as beneficence of which, were generally recognized in the assembly. With a view to obtain the consent of the parliament of Tours, and of inducing that court to register the edict, it was declared to be only temporary or provisional, till the religious differences could be finally terminated in a meeting of the three orders, when the kingdom should be restored to peace and submission. [q]

Ineffectual opposition of the Cardinal of Bourbon.

[q] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 366—369. Chron. Nov. vol. ii. p. 447, 448. Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 483.

Desirous

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Desirous nevertheless, while he thus extended protection to the Hugonots, to tranquillize the minds of his Catholic subjects; he issued a second edict or declaration, by which he not only confirmed the antient religion, but renewed the promise made on his accession, of causing himself to be instructed, preparatory to his conversion. He was notwithstanding, more indebted to the injudicious violence of his enemies, than to the attachment or submission of his own followers, for the obedience and affection exhibited towards his person. The new pontiff, Gregory the Fourteenth, adopting with servile deference, the enmities and interests of Philip the Second, had already renewed the ecclesiastical censures and excommunication, issued by Sixtus, some years preceding, against Henry. His Nuntio, Landriano, whom he had dispatched to France; acting in contradiction not only to the advice of the Duke of Mayenne, but against the opinions of the most moderate individuals of that faction, published on his arrival, two admonitions, calculated to excite universal indignation. They were conceived in language the most violent and indecent, as well as arrogant and presumptuous. All the prelates and ecclesiastics who adhered to the royal party, were enjoined within fifteen days to quit the country which acknowledged Henry, on pain of incurring the immediate privation of their preferments and benefices. The nobility, magistrates, and people, were in like manner exhorted to abandon Henry of Bourbon, as being excom-

Second edict of Henry, for the protection of the Catholic religion.

Imprudent conduct of the Papal Nuntio.

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excommunicated, relapsed, and incapable of wearing the crown. [r]

1591. Its effects.

So injudicious an abuse of the pontifical power, instead of producing the effect intended, proved highly beneficial to the King's affairs. Neither obedience nor deference were paid to mandates, equally unjust in themselves, and disgraceful to the Holy See. The liberties of the Gallican church were firmly maintained, and vigorously asserted by the clergy, assembled at Mantes. It was even proposed to elect a patriarch, or to convoke a national council, in order to provide a remedy for the disorders caused by the Papal interdict. The parliaments of Tours and of Chalons, attached to the crown, as well as justly incensed at an act subversive of the fundamental rights of the monarchy, expressed their indignation by still more energetic proceedings. Having declared the admonitions seditious and impious, commanding them to be lacerated and burnt by the common executioner; those parliaments ordered the Nuntio Landriano to be apprehended, and brought to their bar as a state criminal. Gregory the Fourteenth himself was not spared, in the decree published on the occasion. He was treated as an enemy of the repose of the Catholic church, a partizan of Spain, and an accomplice in the detestable assassination of Henry the Third. We must own that so patri-

Spirited conduct of the parliaments.

[r] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 361. Chron. Nov. vol. ii. p. 449, 450. Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 479, 480.

otic

otic and enlightened a declaration, seemed to breathe the spirit of a less superstitious age. [s]

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If the court and camp of the King, thus agitated by factions, were rendered the scene of political intrigue, the Duke of Mayenne could neither boast of enjoying greater tranquillity nor security. Elevated rather by a series of accidents, than by pre-eminent merit, to the dangerous post of chief of "the League," he beheld himself surrounded by precipices, undermined by secret cabals, and attacked by open enmity. His uterine brother, the Duke of Nemours, elated with the success which had attended his late defence of the capital, and idolized by the Parisians, demanded the government of Normandy. Having met with a refusal from Mayenne, he had retired in disgust to Lyons, of which city he was governor, and where he attempted to erect an independent principality [t]. The Duchess of Guise, widow of Henry who had been assassinated at Blois, complained on the other hand, that no measures were taken, nor even a disposition manifested, to procure the deliverance of her son the young Duke, who languished in close confinement at Tours [u]. In Brittany, the Duke of Mercœur, who seemed to have renounced all dependance on the party, had avowedly no other object in view, except to revive in his own person the sovereignty of the antient dukes of that province. The Duke

Embarrassments of the Duke of Mayenne.

[s] Davila, p. 1013, 1014. De Thou, vol. xi. p. 370—372. Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 481, 482, and p. 484.

[t] Davila, p. 983, 984.

[u] Ibid. p. 984, 985.

of

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of Lorrain beheld with jealous concern, the elevation of a collateral, remote branch of his house, to so high and enviable a superiority as was possessed by Mayenne: while Charles Emanuel, Duke of Savoy, aided by his father-in-law the Catholic King, and already in possession of a considerable part of Provence, disdained even the forms of deference towards the chief of "the League." [x]

State of Paris.

Nor was the internal aspect of Paris by any means calculated to afford him consolation for these multiplied external embarrassments. The inhabitants, impoverished by civil war, and oppressed by severe exactions levied for its support, not only complained of such rigorous demands, made on their property; but accused the executive government with being guilty of profusion, negligence, and peculation.

Council of sixteen. Their authority and proceedings.

Above all the other constituted authorities, the "Council of sixteen," so denominated from the sixteen wards or quarters, into which the capital was divided; gave alarming tokens of alienation, and even manifested a desire to arrogate to themselves exclusively the supreme civil, as well as municipal power. Having been highly instrumental towards effecting the revolt of the metropolis during the late reign, they had eminently conduced to the elevation of the Duke of Guise. But, conscious of the magnitude of their services, they affected complete independance on his brother; and, corrupted by Spanish gold, they shewed a desire to confer the crown

[x] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 356, 357. Davila, p. 983.

of

of France itself on Philip their benefactor[y]. Mendoza and Ibarra, the two embassadors of Spain, fomenting the misintelligence, excited continual dissensions or impediments to the Duke, while they withheld the pecuniary supplies indispensable for sustaining the public cause. In vain, with a view to surmount their opposition, he had dispatched the President Jeannin to Madrid, as his agent; under an expectation of obtaining from Philip himself, a modification of the restraints imposed on the payment of remittances for the support of the troops. That monarch, though he received the Duke's minister with politeness, admitted him repeatedly to an audience, and treated him with complacency, yet remained inflexible as to the points demanded by Mayenne. He even expressed dissatisfaction, at the enormous amount of the sums already advanced to aid the cause of rebellion, for which he had hitherto received no compensation; and unveiled at the same time his expectation of placing the French crown on the head of his daughter, the Infanta Clara Isabella.[z]

Ineffectual efforts of Mayenne, to emancipate himself.

Hostilities, which had been in some measure suspended during a considerable time by mutual weakness, at length began anew in the northern provinces; where Henry's ascendant continuing to be manifest in every enterprize, he maintained a decided superiority over his more inactive, or more cautious adversary. The Duke of Mayenne even proved unsuccessful in

Military operations.

[y] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 438.

[z] Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 478, 479. Davila, p. 986.

an

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an attempt made to surprize the little town of Mantes situate on the Seine, which had no other effect than removing the council of state to Chartres; a city, from its magnitude and strength, as well as from its situation, far better adapted for the seat of such an assembly. Henry on the other hand, after making himself master of Louviers in Normandy, sat down before Noyon, a place of importance, situate near the frontier of Picardy. Mayenne, though loudly invoked to come to their assistance by the garrison, which made a vigorous defence, and though much superior in strength to the royal army, did not venture on hazarding an action for its relief. He even suffered the aggravated mortification of remaining a passive spectator of its surrender, and of being insulted in his camp by the King, who repeatedly offered him battle. Noyon, thus pressed, and hopeless of succour, as well as apprehensive of being carried by storm, capitulated on honorable conditions.[a]

Siege of Noyon.

19th Aug.

The embarrassments of the chief of "the "League" became still further augmented at this period, by a new and unforeseen event. His nephew, the young Duke of Guise, having artfully deceived his guards, effected his escape with equal boldness and success, at noon day, from the castle of Tours; in which fortress, ever since his father's assassination, he had been detained a prisoner. It seems difficult to judge, whether the concern expressed by Henry on

Escape of the Duke of Guise from Tours.

15th Aug.

[a] Chron. Nov. vol. ii. p. 460—464. D'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 246. Davila, p. 1019—1023. Sully, vol. i. p. 81—84.

receiving

receiving the intelligence, was feigned or real. If his first emotions of sorrow and apprehension were natural, at the liberation of a prince whose name alone impressed terror, and round whom all the zealous or disaffected Catholics would probably assemble; those fears must have been considerably diminished or dissipated by his subsequent reflexions. He foresaw that a dangerous and troublesome rival to the Duke of Mayenne, must necessarily arise in the person of his nephew; whose deliverance, far from eventually adding strength to "the "League," already composed of heterogeneous and discordant materials, would tend to accelerate its dissolution. The event fully justified these conjectures, though the Duke of Mayenne, with decent dissimulation, dispatched one of his friends, with orders to express to the young Prince the satisfaction which he felt, on so fortunate and unexpected a termination of his captivity. Having accompanied the message with a supply of money, he added a request that they might speedily meet, in order to confer more fully in person on their common interests. [b]

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Consequences of that event.

If the provinces in the vicinity of Paris constituted the principal theatre of the war, we must not on that account be led to suppose, that any part of the kingdom remained totally exempt from its destructive ravages. The obscure depredations, and desultory incursions of

Operations and ravages in the provinces.

[b] Chron. Nov. vol. ii. p. 465—467. De Thou, vol. xi. p. 380—383. Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 490, 491. Davila, p. 1029, 1030.

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the two conflicting parties, though they involved in distress the inferior orders of the people, peculiarly the peasants; were yet for the greater part, neither deserving of historical commemoration, nor sufficiently decisive in themselves, to operate materially on the final event of the contest. In Brittany, where the Spanish forces serving under the Duke of Mercœur, were counterbalanced by three thousand English auxiliaries, whom Elizabeth had dispatched to reinforce the royal army; no important advantage was obtained on either side. But, the campaign became nevertheless too fatally distinguished by the death of La Noue. That commander, whom Henry had recently sent to guide the inexperience, and to temper the ardor of the Prince of Dombes, son to the Duke of Montpensier; received a wound in the head, while reconnoitring the breach of the town of Lamballe. He expired a few days afterwards, at the age of sixty. In military capacity, mature experience, and talents for war, France produced no general of superior reputation, during the civil dissentions by which it was so long agitated in the fifteenth century. A greater degree of good fortune seemed alone wanting, in order to complete the measure of his fame. Covered with wounds, received in a variety of combats, he had languished several years in severe confinement, by order of Philip the Second, who could not be induced to release him without the utmost difficulty and repugnance. That monarch gave, himself, the most

Brittany.

4th Aug. Death of La Noue.

His character.

most honorable and flattering testimony to the high merit of La Noue, by exacting from him, previous to his liberation from captivity, an oath never to bear arms against Spain. The Dukes of Lorrain, and of Guise, did not hesitate, though his enemies, to become security for the performance of his engagement [c]. But, his military endowments, however eminent, constituted his smallest claim to respect and admiration. The simplicity of his manners, the incorruptibility and integrity of his deportment, his loyalty, combined with his contempt of private interest, when opposed to the public benefit; — these qualities, little cultivated in a ferocious and bigotted age, equal him in some degree with Phocion, Epaminondas, and the illustrious names of antiquity. Zealously attached to the Protestant faith during the course of a long life, he was nevertheless free from illiberality or contraction of mind; and he did not hesitate to avow to Henry himself, that his renunciation of the reformed religion was indispensable, if he ever hoped to establish his title to the throne, or to reign in tranquillity over the French nation [d]. The King paid the public tribute of tears to his memory. [e]

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While the Duke of Mercœur in the north west portion of France, endeavoured to make himself sovereign of Brittany; the ambition of the Duke of Savoy rendered Provence in the south east quarter, a scene of more than ordi-

Progress of the Duke of Savoy, in Provence.

[c] Chron. Nov. vol. ii. p. 468.
[d] Davila, p. 1009.
[e] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 398. Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 492, 493.

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nary confusion. It remained indeed long doubtful, whether the whole of that maritime province, containing ports and harbours of inestimable value, would not be subjected by his arms, or gained over by his intrigues. His activity, valor, and munificence, acquired him numerous adherents: he was supported by Spanish troops, gallies, and money; nor was he deficient in all the qualities calculated to inspire affection, as well as to captivate the multitude. But, his forces, destitute of military discipline, were commanded by unskilful, or incapable leaders. The courage and ability of La Valette, sustained by the steady valor of Lesdiguieres, who jointly conducted the royal affairs and armies, finally rendered ineffectual all his exertions. On the other hand, the defection and ambition of a private citizen of Marseilles, whom the Duke, during his absence on a voyage which he made to Barcelona, had entrusted to distribute money among the inhabitants; deprived him of the possession of that commercial and important place. Marseilles, governed by two aspiring and turbulent individuals, who assumed the name of Duumvirs, having refused to admit Charles Emanuel within the walls, maintained its complete independance of the French crown, for several successive years. The Savoyard generals were completely routed by Lesdiguieres; the soldiers who escaped, being either reduced to surrender prisoners of war, or to take refuge among the snows and precipices of the Alps.

18th Sep. He is defeated by Lesdiguieres.

Almost

Almost all the towns which had voluntarily submitted to the Duke on his first arrival, deserting him in the decline of his fortune, returned to their allegiance. These adverse events proved notwithstanding, insufficient for inducing him to abandon his design; and he continued to make new, though unsuccessful efforts, for the re-establishment of his affairs in that quarter of the kingdom. [f] 1591.

Henry marches into Lorrain.

Meanwhile the King, after the capture of Noyon, directing his march towards the frontiers of Lorrain, advanced to meet and conduct the German troops who had arrived to his assistance. He was accompanied by near a thousand cavalry, and he immediately reviewed the auxiliaries, amounting to sixteen thousand horse and foot, in the plains of Vandy. The successful exertions of the Viscount Turenne, in levying and bringing to his aid so important a succour; were repaid by Henry with the hand of Charlotte de la Mark, heiress of the house of Bouillon, sovereign princess of the city of Sedan and its dependant territory. Having refreshed his forces during a few days, he led them in person to Verdun, under the walls of which place were encamped the Dukes of Lorrain and of Mayenne. They had been recently joined by the Italian army sent from Gregory the Fourteenth, under the command of his

29th Sep.

[f] Chron. Nov. vol. ii. p. 240—423, and p. 473—477. D'Aubigné, vol. iii. 282, 283. De Thou, vol. xi. p. 407—422. Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 485—490. Davila, p. 1024—1026. Vie de Lesdiguieres, p. 113—125.

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nephew the Duke of Monte Marciano. But, the enfeebled state of the Papal infantry, deficient in every requisite for efficient service, and broken by diseases; neither encouraged, nor would have justified the general of "the "League," in hazarding an engagement. Henry finding it impossible to induce the confederates to quit the protection of the cannon of Verdun, decamped therefore, and took the road towards Normandy; where by his orders, Marshal Biron had already made preparations for an enterprize of equal magnitude and difficulty. It was determined to undertake the siege of Rouen, capital of the province, one of the most considerable cities in the kingdom; a resolution embraced in compliance with the solicitation of the Queen of England, who sent the celebrated and unfortunate Devereux, Earl of Essex, at the head of a body of forces, to co-operate with the royal army; rather than from any well founded conviction of the practicability of the attempt itself. Some weeks elapsed notwithstanding, before Biron ventured formally to invest the place, or before he was joined by the King, at the head of his remaining troops.[s]

1591. Offers battle to the army of "the "League."

Preparations for the siege of Rouen.

1st Dec.

15th Oct. Death of Gregory the Fourteenth.

The death of Gregory the Fourteenth, which took place at this period, after a short pontificate of only ten months, imposed new obstacles on the Italian auxiliaries, sent to co-operate with the Duke of Mayenne. Their commander did not hesitate to signify instantly, his determination

[s] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 432, and p. 451—456. Chron. Nov. vol. ii. p. 478—483. Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 496, 497.

of

of regulating his future motions by the orders of the cabinet of Madrid, and of receiving no directions except from the Duke of Parma[h]. But, a far more serious calamity, seeming to threaten the subversion, or dissolution of the political fabrick of "the League" itself, engrossed the whole attention of its chief. The "Council of "sixteen," an assembly, which in the principles of insubordination and violence that characterized its proceedings, bore a striking analogy to the Jacobin club of 1792; emboldened by Mayenne's absence from the capital, secretly stimulated by the agents, and corrupted by the bribes of Spain; no longer even affected to pay obedience to his orders. After having sent a deputation composed of their own members, to wait on him with various insolent demands; and having written to Philip the Second, making an offer of the crown of France to that monarch; they determined at once to confirm their authority, while they extinguished all opposition to their future proceedings, by a stroke of exemplary severity, or rather of lawless atrocity. The greatest obstacle to their unlimited power in the metropolis, arose from the parliament of Paris; which august assembly, though modelled according to the principles of the Guises, was yet by its very formation, functions, and constitution, naturally inclined to support the crown. Brisson, who then occupied the office of first President, a man of distinguished talents, eloquence, and erudition; wearied with the scenes

Intrigues and designs of the "Council of "sixteen."

[h] Davila, p. 1036.

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of anarchy and oppression which he continually witnessed, was suspected of wishing to see monarchy restored, in the person of the rightful sovereign. Conscious that he had become an object of detestation to the partizans of Spain, in consequence of these supposed wishes, he is said to have predicted and apprehended his approaching destiny.[i]

The acquittal of a person named Brigard, whom the parliament, acting in their juridical capacity, declared to be innocent of any criminal correspondence with the royalists; afforded the "Sixteen" a plausible pretence and occasion for gratifying their vengeance. After many nocturnal meetings, in which they agitated the business, a determination was embraced of seizing and putting to death the President, together with two Counsellors of the parliament, particularly obnoxious to their resentment. Certain members of their own body were entrusted with the execution of so daring and flagitious a resolution. Having, comformably to it, made themselves masters of Brisson's person, in the midst of Paris, while discharging the functions of his office, he was conducted to the prison of the little "Chatelet;" where, after a short recrimination, rather than examination, precisely similar to the trials of the revolutionary tribunals common at the commencement of the French Revolution, that magistrate was, by the hands of the public executioner, hanged upon a beam

They resolve to put to death the obnoxious members of the parliament of Paris.

[i] Chron. Nov. vol. ii. p. 504, 505, and p. 522, 523. De Thou, vol. xi. p. 438—441.

in

in an apartment of the prison. He suffered with composure, firmness, and dignity. Larcher and Tardif, two of his colleagues, being seized and brought to the same place, were dispatched by a similar summary process. The three bodies, despoiled of their official robes in which they had been executed, and only covered with a shirt, being on the following evening transported to the "Greve," a spot reserved for executions; remained long exposed to the curiosity of the people. Far however, from exciting those emotions of indignation and abhorrence among the populace, which they were expected to produce; the spectacle appearing on the contrary to awaken commiseration in the beholders, the corpses, by order of the "Sixteen," were therefore removed and interred. [k]

CHAP. II. 1591. 15th Nov. Deaths of Brisson, Larcher, and Tardif.

No sooner was intelligence of this tragical and violent proceeding, conveyed by repeated couriers, to the Duke of Mayenne, than instantly quitting Soissons, at the head of about three hundred cavalry, and fifteen hundred foot, he marched strait to the metropolis. Uncertain of the nature of his determination respecting them, and apprehensive of the effects of his resentment, the "Council of sixteen," after much irresolution, sent a deputation to meet him without the city, authorized to palliate, if not to exculpate their conduct; but the Duke declined even to hear their justification. Entering Paris, he nevertheless temporized and dis-

Duke of Mayenne arrives at Paris.

[k] Davila, p. 1040—1042. De Thou, vol. xi. p. 442—445. Chron. Nov. vol. ii. p. 506—515.

sembled

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sembled during a few days; till having lulled them into a false security, and fully ascertained the facility of inflicting punishment on them, he resolved, notwithstanding the solicitations of the Spanish embassador in their favour, to execute a signal act of vengeance in their persons. Sentence of death, drawn up and signed by his own hand, was issued against nine of the most culpable individuals. Previous to this measure, Bussy le Clerc, one of the principal accomplices, to whom the fortress of the Bastile had been entrusted, being summoned by the Duke to surrender, agreed to evacuate the castle, on promise of personal safety. Notwithstanding the exertions made for the purpose, only four of the late criminals could be found; whose obscure names history has preserved from oblivion, and who expiated by a prompt, as well as ignominious execution, their recent atrocities.

He causes four of the Leaguers to be executed. 4th Dec.

They were instantly hanged, in a room of the palace of the Louvre. Their accomplices, concealed by the Spanish and Neapolitan troops in garrison at Paris, or apprized betimes of their danger, having eluded the search made after them, took refuge at Brussels, where they found an asylum under the protection of the Duke of Parma.[1]

Suppression of the "Council "of six-"teen."

Satisfied with having restored the respect due to his authority, by so vigorous an exertion of the supreme power vested in his person; and desirous of not driving to extremity, minds

[1] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 446—449. Chron. Nov. vol. ii. p. 515—519. Davila, p. 1042—1047.

already

already exasperated against his government; the Duke of Mayenne soon afterwards caused the parliament of Paris to publish letters of abolition and amnesty, for all the other individuals concerned in the recent transactions. But, he not only suppressed the "Council of sixteen:" every species of assembly held for purposes of cabal or discussion, was prohibited on pain of death; and the houses in which any such meetings should be held, were ordered to be razed to the ground. A new oath of the most binding nature, confirming and cementing the union, was administered to governors of places, and officers of "the holy League." They engaged specially by this act, not only to renounce all private and personal intelligence with the Spaniards; but likewise never to permit of the election of any king, without previously obtaining the Duke's express consent and participation. The parliament next underwent a material change. Four Presidents being created, in order to supply the vacant seats, every step was taken which might at once restore tranquillity in the metropolis, and fully obliterate the memory of the troubles by which it had been lately agitated[m]. Those persons who were accustomed to reflect on human events, as constituting objects of philosophical and moral attention; could not help imagining that they witnessed a just retribution of Providence, when they beheld the very council, whose factious and

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Subsequent acts of Mayenne.

Reflexions on these events.

[m] Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 498—505. De Thou, vol. xi. p. 448. Chron. Nov. vol. ii. p. 519—522.

turbu-

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turbulent spirit had eminently contributed to elevate the Duke of Guise, so soon afterwards exterminated by his own brother. The zealous partizans of insurrection, who only saw in these transactions, the consequences with which they were pregnant; lamented, or predicted the injurious, and inevitable tendency of a measure, which deprived the Duke of Mayenne himself, of a most powerful engine of his revolutionary government. Philip the Second, however penetrated he might be with concern, at the extinction of one of his principal political supports, remained silent from prudence: while the Duke of Parma, whether from conviction, or from policy, applauded the vigor, while he extolled the moderation, of the head of "the "League." [n]

[n] Davila, p. 1047.

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Commencement of the siege of Rouen. — Measures of Villars, for its defence. — Preparation for the second march of the Duke of Parma into France. — The King is wounded in a skirmish. — Advance of the confederate army to Rouen. — Successful sally of Villars. — Retreat of the confederates. — Their return before Rouen. — Henry raises the siege. — Caudebec taken by the allies. — Duke of Parma wounded. — The King attacks the army of Spain and "the League." — Their distress. — The allies pass the Seine. — Able conduct of the Duke of Parma. — Negociation between Henry and the Duke of Mayenne. — Embassy sent to Pope Clement the Eighth. — Siege of Epernay. — Death of Marshal Biron. — State of Paris. — Hostilities in the provinces. — Death of the Duke of Parma. — Convocation of the States General. — Conferences of Surenne. — Siege of Noyon. — Henry determines to abjure the reformed religion. — Propositions of the Spanish embassadors, for the election of a King. — Intrigues and delays in the assembly of the States. — Nomination of the Duke of Guise. — His rejection. — Preparations for Henry's abjuration. — Ceremony of it performed at St. Denis. — Truce proclaimed. — Dismission of the States General.

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WHILE the Duke of Mayenne, by these acts of wholesome energy and severity, sustained his declining authority, and restored a temporary calm to the capital, Henry had already engaged in the siege of Rouen: an under-

Causes which led to the

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1591. siege of Rouen.

undertaking not only arduous and difficult in itself, but which, from the circumstances that followed it, had nearly involved him in complete destruction. Elizabeth, Queen of England, whose magnanimity never suffered her, at any period of her reign, to lose sight of her interest; and whose policy was always directed to the security and aggrandizement of her crown, or to the advantage of her people; had eminently contributed to produce the adoption of that hazardous measure. In recompence for the liberal supplies of men and money with which she had assisted the royal cause, she demanded the cession of a port situate upon the British channel. Her ministers, who named Dieppe or Calais, for that purpose, repeated the requisition with unceasing importunity. Henry justly dreading the odium, as well as the danger annexed to the introduction of the English into the kingdom, who had been expelled with such difficulty from France, under Charles the Seventh, opposed various delays to the compliance with so harsh a request. Unwilling on the one hand, to cede Dieppe, which had manifested its unshaken adherence to his cause, in the critical extremity of his fortune, immediately after his accession; and under the walls of which town he had repulsed the army of "the League;" his reluctance to restore Calais, was still greater: nor could he avoid recollecting that the English, after retaining it more than two centuries in their possession, had only been re-

cently deprived of that place, by the fortunate audacity, and superior skill of Francis, Duke of Guise. Anxious at the same time to conciliate an ally, from whom he had already received so many essential services, and whose future support was so requisite to facilitate all his plans, he engaged to besiege Rouen; in which place, whenever it should be captured, he promised to grant Elizabeth's subjects, various privileges and exemptions, highly beneficial to their commerce.[a]

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Rouen, capital of Upper Normandy, might be esteemed in the sixteenth, as it still continues to be in the nineteenth century, one of the most considerable cities of the kingdom. Its position on the Seine, many leagues lower down than Paris, together with its vicinity to the metropolis, gave it additional importance. At the commencement of the civil wars under Charles the Ninth, Rouen had been captured by the royal forces, who entered it by storm: but as if a sort of fatality affecting the house of Bourbon, always attended the enterprize, Anthony, King of Navarre, Henry's father, had perished before it, by a wound which he there received in the shoulder. Villars, who commanded in the place, joined to a natural thirst for glory, and an inflexible adherence to his party, all the qualifications of an able general. Aware of Henry's design, or suspecting his intention, he had made with equal activity and prudence, every timely preparation to sustain a

State and condition of that city.

[a] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 452. Davila, p. 1052.

siege.

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siege. After having expelled all such individuals as he judged to be incapable of assisting in its defence, he secured the persons of the wavering, or the disaffected. The garrison being augmented, magazines were provided, the fortifications repaired, and no exertion was omitted, that could render abortive the attempt. Correspondent effects resulted from these judicious and salutary precautions. Although after the commencement of the siege, the emulation excited among the various nations composing Henry's army, aided by the presence of that Prince, who never declined to partake of the common danger, produced unusual efforts of valor; yet little progress was effected by the assailants. Villars, who continually made sallies planned with admirable skill, conducted them with equal success. The regular troops shut up in the place, were moreover aided on all occasions by the citizens; who despising the mere passive constancy exhibited by the Parisians under the pressure of famine, aspired to the praise of active courage in defence of their city. All the attempts made to gain admittance by corruption, or to effect its capture by surprize, being rendered ineffectual by the vigilance of the governor, the final event might still be considered as very uncertain and problematical. [b]

December. Commencement of the siege.

Mayenne demands aid of the

The Duke of Mayenne on the other hand, beheld with the liveliest apprehension, and

[b] D'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 257—260. De Thou, vol. xi. p. 451—459, and p. 464, 465. Sully, vol. i. p. 85—88. Davila, p. 1052—1066.

anti-

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1591. Duke of Parma.

anticipated with anxiety, the consequences of the siege. If Rouen should fall into the King's possession, he justly foresaw that its fate would draw after it the metropolis, and be infallibly followed by the extinction or suppression of "the League." He found himself unable to levy such a body of forces, from the portion of the French monarchy which owned his power, as might either enable him to raise the siege, or to offer battle to the enemy. All his hopes therefore centering in the interposition of Spain, he earnestly implored the Duke of Parma, whose presence in the preceding year had proved so useful, to march a second time to his support. The young Duke of Guise, whom his uncle had received with external demonstrations of affection and regard, advanced as far as Landrecy in Flanders, in order to accelerate the arrival of the Spanish army: while the Duke of Parma, who had received peremptory directions from Madrid, to comply with Mayenne's solicitations, exhibited the utmost promptitude in making his preparations to enter France. Previous however to carrying into execution so important a measure, he made two demands in the name of the Catholic King his master, both which he declared to be of a nature not admitting a refusal. The first, was the cession of La Fere, a frontier city of Picardy, as a place of security for his artillery. By the second stipulation he exacted a promise from the Duke of Mayenne, to convoke the States General, and to cause the In-

Preliminaries demanded, before the entrance of the Spanish troops.

 fanta

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fanta Clara Isabella to be recognized in that assembly, Queen of France. Philip in return, offered to give his daughter's hand in marriage to the Prince, whoever he might be, whom the representatives of the French nation should elect for their sovereign. He further engaged, as soon as the Infanta's title should be publickly owned, to send such powerful forces into the kingdom, as might speedily and effectually crush the King of Navarre. Every assurance or concession, which could reconcile the chief of "the League" to these propositions; which could gratify his vanity, or advance his personal interests, were liberally granted by the ministers of the Spanish monarch. [c]

Repugnance of the Duke of Mayenne.

However great might be the embarrassments, and however pressing the necessity of the Duke of Mayenne, he nevertheless hesitated on complying with such severe conditions. Reluctant to yield to the Catholic King, a place of such strength as La Fere, which gave an easy entrance into Picardy, he was nevertheless reduced to comply, not only by the exigency of his affairs; but perhaps still more, from the just apprehension, that his refusal would not preserve the city; Colas, the governor, having already treated with the Duke of Parma, for the terms of its surrender [d]. To the second proposition, which was negotiated between Jeannin, acting as agent for Mayenne, and Ibarra, the

[c] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 459—463. Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 506, 507. Davila, p. 1067—1069.

[d] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 460.

minister

minister of Philip; though it included the transfer of the crown and monarchy of France, to the house of Austria, he manifested less repugnance. The convocation of the States general, he knew, was distant and uncertain: it might be retarded by the events of war, averted altogether by address, or finally rendered subservient, under favorable circumstances, to his own personal elevation. The danger of Rouen, on the contrary, present and imminent, admitted of no delay. He therefore, after some irresolution, complied with the requisition; promising to assemble the States, as soon as the necessary steps could with safety be taken for the purpose [e]. These important preliminaries being adjusted, the confederate army entering Picardy, directed their march towards Rouen.

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He complies with them.

No sooner had Henry received intelligence, that the Dukes of Parma and Mayenne prepared jointly to attack him, than he embraced the most effectual measures for retarding, and if possible, defeating their intention. With more pertinacity than prudence, he determined not to allow the object of his present exertions to escape his grasp, with the same facility as Paris had done, on the approach of the Spanish army to its relief. Leaving therefore, Marshal Biron with the infantry, to continue the siege of Rouen, he quitted the camp, at the head of above three thousand French and German cavalry, with which force he advanced up to the gates of Abbeville in Picardy. Falling unex-

1592. January. Henry advances to meet the Allies.

[e] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 461—463. Davila, p. 1066—1069. Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 506, 507.

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1592. Skirmish at Aumale.

pectedly, on the Duke of Guise's quarters, Henry cut to pieces a considerable number of his soldiers; but every effort which the King made to induce the enemy's horse, leaving the protection of the foot, to engage him in the field, proved ineffectual. The Spanish general, intent only on one great object, unacquainted with the country through which lay his march, and conscious that he had to contend with an adversary equally intrepid and indefatigable, was not shaken in his determination. Present in the center of his army, although the feeble state of his health incapacitated him for much active exertion; he superintended every movement, and studiously repressed the indiscreet valor of his troops. The temerity of the King on the contrary, had nearly proved fatal to himself, and at once decided the contest between them. Desirous to inspect personally the appearance of the confederate forces, he imprudently engaged a superior body of their cavalry, near the town of Aumale, and was reduced to retreat with precipitation. As his voice, armor, and figure, all rendered him conspicuous, the enemy pursuing with redoubled ardor, had nearly made themselves masters of his person. Almost all his followers, composed of the bravest and most distinguished officers or nobility, were unhorsed and wounded on the occasion. Henry himself was struck by a ball which entered his back, but having fortunately passed through the saddle before it reached him, only inflicted a slight wound. The Duke of Mayenne warmly pressed his colleague to give

5th Feb.

The King is wounded.

give orders for the infantry to advance without a moment's delay, assuring him that the King could not escape falling into his hands. But, the Duke of Parma, accustomed to act on principles, not on probabilities; apprehensive that the flight of the enemy might only be intended to draw him into an ambuscade, refused to yield to these solicitations. His caution, however just and commendable it might be, yet extricated the King; and the approach of night enabled him to rejoin his troops. [f]

CHAP. III. 1592.

Reasons for the conduct of the Duke of Parma.

Far from being elated by such an advantage, or pressing forward his march, as every motive seemed to dictate, while Henry's wound incapacitated him for active service; the Spanish commander continued to advance towards the frontier of Normandy, by slow and regular stages. He afterwards justified his line of action, in not causing the allied troops to pursue their late success, by observing, that "when "he opposed the King of Navarre, he had be- "lieved himself contending with a general, and "not fighting against a carabineer." Unwilling to plunge into a country the resources of which were already consumed, and particularly attentive to supply his soldiers with provisions; the Duke, who regulated all his motions by the maxims of consummate military skill, trusted no event to fortune. Meanwhile the King, who had retired to Dieppe, recovering from the consequences of his wound, exerted every effort

[f] Davila, p. 1073—1077. De Thou, vol. xi. p. 466, 467. D'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 262, 263. Sully, vol. i. p. 89—93. Chron. Nov. vol. ii. p. 18, 19.

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to impede the confederate army in its progress, by occupying the strongest positions, and repeatedly attacking their quarters. Givry, one of his bravest captains, having thrown himself into the little town of Neufchatel, though the place was almost defenceless in itself, and he suffered severely from by a wound in the foot; yet by his desperate resistance, interposing a delay of some days, gave the royal party a short respite, in which to embrace measures of safety. The allies having nevertheless at length surmounted every obstacle, arrived within a few leagues of the besieged city, the relief of which constituted the principal object of the Duke of Parma's entrance into France. It was here determined in a council of war, to attack without delay, the head quarters of Marshal Biron. They were separated by a considerable distance, from those which the King occupied; who having taken his station in the rear of the confederates, in order to intercept their convoys, could not without time and difficulty, advance to the relief of his infantry engaged before Rouen. Every disposition was accordingly made by the combined generals, for carrying the design into immediate and vigorous execution; when an unexpected event which arrested their motions, materially affecting the progress of the campaign, produced a new aspect of affairs.[g]

1592. Givry defends Neufchatel.

Determination of the confederates to attack the royal army.

Villars, whose active and enterprizing character impelled him always to adopt the most

[g] Davila, p. 1080—1082. Sully, vol. i. p. 93. Chron. Nov. vol. ii. p. 20, 21.

decided

1592

decided measures; apprehensive that if the Spanish commander should effect the deliverance of Rouen, a garrison composed of foreign troops, might be left behind in the place; had already in a great measure anticipated the plan concerted by the Dukes of Parma and Mayenne. Profiting of the complete division of the royal forces into two widely separated bodies, and of the King's absence, he sallied out, at the head of near two thousand horse and foot; having previously received information from a deserter, which pointed out the most exposed quarter of the camp. No effectual opposition being made on the part of the besiegers, the trenches were carried with irresistible impetuosity. Consternation and terror universally prevailed: the works were demolished, the mines blown up, the cannon spiked or carried off, and all the advances made before Rouen, were completely destroyed in a short time. Biron arriving with the French and German infantry, at length repulsed the enemy, and compelled them to retire into the city; but not before he had sustained a loss of five hundred killed, and nearly double the number wounded. [h] Intelligence of this important transaction was immediately transmitted to the confederates, by Villars; accompanied with the information that he considered himself perfectly secure from any new molestation on the part of the enemy, at least for some days.

Succesful salley, made by Villars. 26th Feb.

[h] Sully, vol. i. p. 93. Davila, p. 1082—1084. De Thou, vol. xi. 471, 472. Chron. Nov. vol. ii. p. 21—25.

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So great an event, which excited very different sentiments in the bosoms of the two commanders, gave rise to opposite opinions on their future military plans. Conscious that an army which had just received so severe a check, was already more than half destroyed, and that it was only necessary to follow up the blow, without giving them time to recover; the Duke of Parma, contrary to the temperate caution of his usual counsels, advised instantly to attack Biron's quarters at the village of Darnetal. He demonstrated to his Ally, the facility and almost certain success which must attend the operation, against an enemy dispirited by recent defeat, reduced in numbers, and unprotected by cavalry. But, the chief of "the "League," satisfied with seeing Rouen relieved, and apprehensive that a victory would transform the Spaniards from auxiliaries, into masters; peremptorily refused to co-operate, or to advance with the troops under his command. The disunion of the confederate generals, extricated the royal forces from the dangerous situation in which they stood; and as the principal object of the expedition seemed to be in some measure accomplished, the combined army, instead of advancing, returned back into Picardy without delay. Having repassed the river Somme, they sat down before Rue, a small fortress of the County of Ponthieu, situated near the coast of the British Channel.[i]

Parma urges to fall on Biron.

Mayenne refuses.

Retreat of the allies.

[i] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 473, 474. Davila, p. 1085, 1086. Chron. Nov. ii. p. 25—27.

Henry

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1592. March. Siege of Rouen, renewed.

Henry meanwhile, disconcerted, but not dejected by the unfortunate events which had taken place before Rouen; repairing to the camp, endeavoured by augmented exertions to retrieve his affairs. Unable to ascertain the nature of the motives that had induced the combined generals to retreat, at a moment when they might have prosecuted their advantages with success, he profited of the circumstance with celerity. The works so lately demolished, being speedily repaired, the siege was pushed forward with the utmost ardor. Villars, whose security or contempt of the assailants was such, that he did not hesitate to celebrate martial exercises and diversions without the gates of the city, as if in time of profound peace; soon began to experience in turn, the liveliest emotions of alarm. All his precautions not being adequate to provide against the encreasing want of provisions, he found himself at length reduced to acquaint the Dukes of Parma and Mayenne, that if he was not succoured within a very limited time, he must necessarily capitulate with the enemy. The confederate chiefs instantly complying with the summons, desisted from the prosecution of the attempt upon Rue, and began their march a second time, towards Rouen. Such was the rapidity with which it was conducted, that only six days were consumed by them in traversing the same tract of country, through which they had not penetrated in thirty, on their preceding invasion. The Duke of Parma having left his heavy baggage behind him,

Rapid march of the allies to its relief.

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him, and being unopposed by the royal cavalry, appeared in the vicinity of Rouen, at the time prefixed by Villars. His army did not indeed exceed five thousand horse, and about twelve thousand infantry; but they were composed of veteran and highly disciplined troops. [k]

20th April. State of the royal forces.

The surprize excited in the royal camp, at the sudden re-appearance of the allied forces, was not unmixed with great apprehension. Henry had neither expected the Duke of Parma's return, nor conceived it possible that he should precipitate his march in so unusual a manner. The nobility and gentry, who composed the principal strength of the royal cavalry, and who served at their own expence; wearied with fruitless expectation of an action, and no longer supported by a hope of engaging the Spaniards, had retired to their castles. Nor was the infantry, reduced in numbers, broken by a five months siege, and discontented from want of pay, capable of standing the shock of the confederate forces, led on by the ablest general in Europe. While the King on one hand could not venture to wait for the attack of the Duke of Parma, in his trenches; it seemed to be scarcely less hazardous on the other, to risk the alternative of a battle. Under these embarrassing circumstances, and having only the choice of evils left him, he supplied in some measure by firmness and prudence, every deficiency.

Henry raises the siege of Rouen.

The Duke of Bouillon, at the head of the German horse, covering the operations of the army,

[k] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 475—478. Davila, p. 1089.

Henry

Henry collected his soldiers, withdrew his cannon, and decamped from before the city; having by a singular fatality beheld Rouen on the present occasion, as Paris had antecedently been, extricated in the last extremity, by the same foreign interposition. His retreat bore notwithstanding, neither the character nor the appearance of flight. He remained on the contrary during a short time, drawn up ready for action, before he finally retired along the eastern bank of the Seine, to Pont de l'Arche; the Baron of Biron protecting and securing the rear.[1] CHAP. III. 1592.

If the exhortations of the Spanish commander had been obeyed, it seems nevertheless probable that Henry might have found all his talents unequal to accomplishing without loss so hazardous an attempt. The Duke of Parma urged his colleague to fall upon the King, while embarrassed in retreating before a superior army; and he answered for the success of the experiment. But, motives similar to those which had impelled the Duke of Mayenne to refuse his concurrence on a former occasion, induced him to withhold it a second time. Justifying his determination by reasons of a local nature, drawn from the exhausted condition of the country, and the difficulty of compelling Henry to risk a battle, without incurring manifest hazard, he remained in this resolution. The confederates having therefore thrown supplies into Rouen, drew off towards Caudebec, a small Opposite opinions of the French, and Spanish commanders. Siege of Caudebec.

[1] Davila, p. 1090, 1091. De Thou, vol. xi. p. 78. Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 510.

town

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town situated on the Seine, several leagues lower down the stream, where magazines of provisions had been laid up by the King. In compliance with the entreaties of his colleague, the Spanish general laid siege to the place, which capitulated in a few days: but while occupied in examining the works, and erecting batteries, Farnese received a wound from a musket ball, under the elbow; which penetrating between the bones of the arm, stuck in the flesh, near the wrist. Having been carried to his tent, the severity of the surgical operations necessary for extracting the ball, when added to his preceding bodily weakness, produced a fever. Incapacitated by pain for acting with energy or effect, during this interval, the Duke of Mayenne exercised the supreme military authority over the allied forces.[m]

Duke of Parma is wounded.

May.

The tide of fortune which had so long persecuted the King, and even reduced him more than once to the verge of ruin, not having been improved by the confederates, returned at length in a contrary direction. While the allies, engaged in besieging Caudebec, neglected to provide the means of retreating into Picardy at their pleasure, if such a measure should finally become necessary; Henry, reinforced from every quarter, prepared to attack them in his turn. The indisposition of the Duke of Parma, which became so severe as to menace his life; together with the imprudence or ob-

Henry prepares to attack the allies.

[m] Sully, vol. i. p. 94. Davila, p. 1094—1097. De Thou, vol. xi. p. 489—491.

stinacy

stinacy of the French commander, had already involved the army in almost insurmountable difficulties. They found themselves entangled in a species of Peninsula formed by the river Seine, which near its mouth becomes an Estuary, and by the British Channel; open only on one side, where it communicated with Upper Normandy. The royal forces advancing on that quarter, enclosed them, straitened their lines, intercepted their convoys, and speedily reduced them to the greatest distress. Henry, conscious that they could neither fight nor escape, except under multiplied embarrassments, adopted on this occasion, a mode of conduct totally repugnant to his natural character. Expecting from time and the progress of famine, the reward of his labours, he no longer desired to provoke the enemy to an action; but occupying all the passes, falling on their out-posts, and harassing them by perpetual skirmishes, he compelled them to recede on every side. [n]

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His operations.

Famine in the allied camp.

Already a variety of calamities began to be experienced in the camp of the allies; where provisions became scarce, and the cavalry stood in want of provender: even water formed an object of purchase; that of the Seine, from its vicinity to the sea, being found brackish and unwholesome. Diseases prevailed in the army, while money was wanting to pay the troops. The Duke of Mayenne himself, severely indisposed, avowed his inability to perform the func-

[n] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 482, 483. Chron. Nov. vol. ii. p. 30, 31.

tions

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tions of commander-in-chief. Yet under this state of privation, danger, and suffering, such was the deference or the affection borne towards the Duke of Parma, and so implicit was the confidence reposed in his superior capacity, that hardly a murmur of discontent pervaded the ranks. The confederates receding before the royal forces, and unable to force a passage through them, retired gradually towards the bank of the Seine, and took post again near the town of Caudebec.

18th May.

Perilous situation of Mayenne and Parma.

From a situation so apparently hopeless and almost desperate, they were only extricated by the sublime talents of the Spanish general. Weakened as he already was by disease, and enfeebled by the effect of his wound, he nevertheless calmly matured a plan, at once daring and unprecedented. After having long revolved it in his mind, he determined to pass his whole army over the Seine, as the only remaining mode of safety. The attempt to cross a river of prodigious breadth, agitated, frequently tempestuous, covered by the vessels of the Dutch, and other auxiliaries of Henry;—to conduct in safety to the opposite bank, a body of forces encumbered with baggage and artillery, in presence of an enemy vigilant to improve every advantage, and eager to assail them in their retreat;—such an experiment might seem to partake rather of temerity, than of wisdom. In order to effect his object, the Duke began by constructing two forts or redoubts, mounted with cannon, one on each side of the Seine, in

1592.

which he stationed a select number of Walloons. Having caused as many boats as could with expedition be collected, to approach the shore, Villars aiding him with rafts and beams, which were floated down the stream from Rouen, during the night; a bridge was instantly constructed. Without a moment's delay, the French infantry and cavalry began to pass over, followed by the baggage and the cannon. The Spanish soldiers closed the line of march; while the Italians, to the number of about one thousand foot, and four hundred horse, completely covered and concealed the operation. Such was the admirable order and silence exhibited during the passage, that soon after break of day, nearly the whole army had reached the opposite shore. °

They pass the Seine. 22d May.

Order observed in the execution of it.

The first intelligence of so incredible an event was brought to Henry, by the Baron of Biron; who having been sent out to reconnoitre the camp, related on his return, that it was already evacuated by the enemy, who were still occupied in crossing the river. Such a piece of information excited not less amazement than despair; the King, thus beholding the prey rescued from his hands, at the precise moment when he regarded it as captured. All his efforts to impede the completion of the enemy's passage, proved ineffectual. The redoubt constructed on the eastern bank, rendered it impracticable for the royal infantry to approach:

Its success.

° Davila, p. 1105—1107. D'Aub. vol. iii. p. 265, 266. Sully, vol. i. p. 94, 95.

while

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while Rainuce, hereditary Prince of Parma, emulating the glory of his father, protected the retreat; caused the artillery to be embarked; and finally passed over to the opposite side, himself, without sustaining any loss.

Ineffectual efforts of the King, to impede them.

A battery which was hastily constructed by Henry's order, together with the exertions of the royal vessels and gallies, which came to his assistance; endangered and delayed, but could not finally prevent the accomplishment of the Duke of Parma's project. Rainuce, after acquiring the highest honor by his cool intrepidity, secured the cannon, set fire to the bridge, and immediately rejoined the confederate army; the divisions of which, as they landed, began to march off towards Rouen. Such was the precipitation with which the Spanish commander urged his retreat, and so much did he dread being overtaken, or compelled to hazard an action; that in four days from his passing the Seine, he reached the bridge of St. Cloud, within two leagues of Paris.

March of Parma.

Having received the congratulations of the Parisians, he continued his progress to Chateau Thierry on the Marne, where he thought proper to give some respite to his troops, and to himself. Only about five hundred infantry, whom fatigue and lassitude had incapacitated for keeping pace with the body of the army, being surrounded by Souvré, whom Henry had sent at the head of two thousand horse, to pursue the Spanish general; were reduced to surrender prisoners of war.

The

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The Duke of Mayenne, not less severely indisposed than his colleague, and unable to accompany him in so rapid a retreat, remained at Rouen, where his recovery was long regarded as doubtful and almost hopeless.[p]

Henry marches into Picardy.

Frustrated in his expectations of terminating the war by one decisive blow, and obliged to dismiss the nobility after so severe a campaign; the King again beheld himself by this sudden reverse, at once precipitated from all his hopes. The superior talents of his enemy, and the confidence which he had too implicitly placed in the impediments opposed to the escape of the confederate army, compelled him once more to renew the contest for his crown. Yielding therefore to necessity, he disbanded a considerable part of his forces: retaining only about five thousand foot, and three thousand horse, he bent his course towards Picardy, in order to prevent the Duke of Parma from attacking or capturing any place of consequence, on his return back to the Netherlands.

That illustrious commander, enfeebled by his wound, and sinking under bodily infirmities, was now rapidly approaching the final limit of his exploits. The seeds of disunion sown during the progress of the late campaign, between him and the chief of "the League," had produced nearly an open rupture; and the preference shewn by the Spanish general on every occasion, to the young Duke of Guise, was not

Disunion between Parma and Mayenne.

[p] Davila, p. 1107—1109. De Thou, vol. xi. p. 485—488. Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 512—514. Chron. Nov. vol. ii. p. 32, 33.

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calculated to allay the quarrel. The Duke of Mayenne remained almost forgotten, at Rouen; and as his disease was believed to be incurable, the ministers of the court of Madrid no longer observed towards him, even the forms of deference or respect. While they refused him supplies of money, they augmented the foreign garrison in the metropolis, and affected to regard his authority as extinct. Irritated at such proceedings, he opened a negociation with the King, notwithstanding the concessions and advances made him by Philip's embassadors, on the recovery of his health. But, the unreasonable demands made by the Duke for himself which did not fall short of erecting an hereditary principality, independant of the crown, within the limits of the French monarchy; finally suspended the treaty [q]. The articles became speedily divulged; and as Henry's renunciation of the Protestant religion, together with his reconciliation to the Romish church within a stipulated period, formed its basis or principle, the Hugonots became universally alarmed at the intelligence. On the other hand, the party formed by the young Cardinal of Bourbon, though repressed, was not extinct; and the zealous Catholics, weary with expecting the accomplishment of the King's promises, or despairing of his conversion, manifested signs of impatience approaching to alienation. His situation, which became daily more critical, demanded resolutions of vigor. It is probable

Ineffectual negociation between Henry and Mayenne.

Critical situation of the King.

[q] Davila, p. 1112—1117. Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 516—518.

that

that a Prince endowed with so much penetration, had long foreseen the necessity of ultimately adopting the national religion; and that he only desired to delay the act, till it could be done without injuring his dignity, or degrading his character in the public estimation. CHAP. III. 1592.

Aldobrandini, a Florentine, then occupied the chair of St. Peter. Elevated to that eminence by the Spanish faction, whose power was irresistible in the Conclave, he embraced, like his predecessors, the interests of "the "League," and even promised some pecuniary assistance to its chief. But, of a temper more moderate, and of a mind more enlarged and pacific than Gregory the Fourteenth, he disdained servilely to become the instrument of Philip the Second's vengeance or ambition. Importuned by the Catholics, and impelled by the hope of finding in the new pontiff, Clement the Eighth, a treatment more generous and paternal, than he had experienced since the decease of Sixtus the Fifth; Henry resolved to open an indirect intercourse with the Holy See. The Cardinal of Gondy, Bishop of Paris, together with the Marquis of Pisani, who had acted as embassador at Rome from Henry the Third, were named to wait on Clement, in the names, and on the part of the Catholic nobility attached to the crown. Their secret instructions were calculated to prepare the way for the reconciliation of the King. Henry even opposed the attempt made nearly at the same time, by the Archbishop of Bourges, to name a patriarch for the government of the Gallican church;

Election of Clement the Eighth.

Henry names two commissioners, to wait on the Pope.

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and exhibited by his conduct, a determination not to separate the kingdom from its obedience to the apostolic see [r]. Measures so politic and conciliating, which promised a speedy termination of the breach in which he was engaged with the court of Rome; tended to restrain the machinations, while they allayed the discontent of the zealous adherents of the antient religion.

They are prohibited from entering Rome.

The embassy was notwithstanding, far from producing immediately the beneficial effects naturally to have been expected from such a step. Clement, irritated against Henry, and uncertain of the final event of the war in which that Prince was engaged; interdicted either the Cardinal or Pisani, from presuming to enter on the ecclesiastical territories: he even expressed his indignation at any attempt made to embrace the cause of an apostate heretic. Time, as well as address were required to mollify the pontiff, and to dispose him towards forgiveness or reconciliation. [s]

July. Hostilities in Champagne.

The events of the war, which had been in some measure suspended by the late negociations, were again renewed about this time: but the theatre of hostilities was transferred from Normandy to Champagne; from the banks of the Seine, to those of the Marne. On his return into Flanders, the Duke of Parma had left behind, a body of auxiliary troops, to act under the orders of the Duke of Mayenne, whom the

[r] Davila, p. 1123, 1124. De Thou, vol. xi. p. 494—499.
[s] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 505—511. Davila, p. 1132—1137.

Spanish

Spanish court was again desirous to attach by the closest tyes. In conjunction with the forces of "the League," they attacked, and carried the town of Epernay. Henry, urged to retake a place, which from its position on the Marne, greatly incommoded his adherents, detached Marshal Biron without delay, with directions to form the siege; while he himself, at the head of the cavalry, overran the open country, quite to the gates of Chalons. Biron lost his life before Epernay, by the stroke of a cannon ball, at an advanced age. His abilities, which were not confined to the camp, his inflexible and loyal adherence to Henry, sustained by the versatile activity of his talents, which embraced the operations of the cabinet, as well as those of the field; had raised him to an extraordinary and envied height of power. Indifferent in concerns of religion, and even suspected of leaning towards the doctrines of the Reformation, he manifested little impatience or anxiety, at the delay of the King's conversion. Accused not only by his enemies, but equally by his friends, of wishing to prolong a war, in which he occupied so distinguished a place, and performed so eminent a part, his ambition was not exempt from severe imputation. His own son is even said to have reproached him with the culpable sacrifice of public duty, to views of private interest, and objects of personal aggrandizement. The King did not the less deplore his loss; and notwithstanding the defects of his character, Biron must be owned to have

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26th July. Death of Marshal Biron.

His character.

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rendered eminent services to that monarch, as well as to the crown of France.[t]

1592. 8th Aug. Capture of Epernay.

Epernay, after a short, but vigorous resistance, was reduced to capitulate; nor were the efforts of the garrison, composed in part of Spaniards, aided by every exertion of the Duke of Guise to throw succours into the place, able long to protract its surrender. In order to coerce the Parisians, and with a view to deprive the capital of the supplies of provisions constantly drawn from the province of Champagne; the King caused a fort to be constructed at Gournay on the Marne, only four leagues distant from Paris. It was raised with such dispatch, and defended with such courage, that the Duke of Mayenne, after vainly attacking it, was necessitated to decamp without success. He had been previously repulsed before Quillebœuf, a little town situate near the mouth of the Seine, which place he besieged in conjunction with Villars. It began to be evident to the nation, that the forces of "the League," no longer sustained by the ability or presence of the Duke of Parma, were unequal to supporting a protracted contest with the King. Philip the Second alone upheld and prolonged the existence of the union, which insensibly began to relax in its violence. The exhausted people loudly demanded a termination of their calamities. Henry's character and qualities, as they became more known to his subjects, excited

Decline of the affairs of Mayenne.

[t] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 490, 491. Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 512, and p. 520. Sully, vol. i. p. 86, and p. 93. Davila, p. 1127, 1128. Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 41. D'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 267.

general affection: only his reconciliation with the See of Rome seemed wanting, to turn in his favor the tide of public opinion. Even in Paris, a city which had been once so devoted to the Guises, where rebellion retired as to a center, a slow and silent fermentation was already begun among the inferior orders. That metropolis, deprived of the lustre of a court, unacquainted with its sovereign, tyrannized by faction, unpeopled by civil war, and destitute of activity, industry, or commerce; presented only the emaciated figure of its preceding greatness, opulence, and prosperity. Such was precisely its condition in March, 1814, towards the close of Bonaparte's destable tyranny, which was marked by similar features of oppression, exhausture, and calamity. The two periods of time, when closely examined, bear the strongest resemblance.

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Deplorable state of Paris.

Garrisoned by Spaniards and Neapolitans, Paris seemed to have anticipated its reduction to the Spanish yoke. Surrounded on all sides by the royal forces, though not formally invested, the inhabitants suffered many of the inconveniences and privations annexed to a state of siege. But, the destruction of the "Council of sixteen," which produced the extinction of that venal and furious faction, had emancipated the loyal and the moderate part of the citizens. Symptoms of returning allegiance so strongly manifested themselves, that it required the personal interposition of the Duke of Mayenne, to prevent their sending a deputation to the King, demanding from him as a grace, the

Indications of returning loyalty, in the people.

26th Oct.

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freedom of communication between Paris and the other cities of the kingdom. The municipal offices and authority, of which the "Sixteen" had been deprived, were exercised by men, the majority of whom secretly wished for the restoration of tranquillity, the expulsion of the Spaniards, and the destruction of "the League." Only the convocation of the States General, which was considered as imminent, and from the deliberations of which assembly, a remedy to the national misfortunes was expected; by repressing the spirit of reviving loyalty, suspended the general disposition towards peace.[u]

Operations of war, in the provinces.

The calamities of war were not less sensibly felt at a distance from the capital, and scarcely any part of the kingdom could be pronounced exempt from its destructive ravages. In Brittany, the princes of Conti and of Dombes, who

25th May.

commanded the royal forces, being attacked near Craön, by the Duke of Mercœur and a body of Spaniards, were defeated. But, this misfortune was amply compensated, by the advantages which Henry's generals obtained in other quarters of France. The Marshal Duke of Bouillon having captured various places in Lorrain, repressed the troops of "the

Defeat, and death of the Duke of Joyeuse. 19th Oct.

League." In Languedoc, the young Duke of Joyeuse, brother to the celebrated favorite of Henry the Third, who was killed at the battle of Coutras, five years earlier; perished by a death not less tragical and premature

[u] Chron. Nov. vol. ii. p. 73—85. De Thou, vol. xi. p. 512.

than

than his predecessor. Having laid siege to Villemur, a town in the vicinity of Toulouse, at the head of a considerable army of Leaguers, he was completely routed, compelled to fly, and drowned in the river Tarn. Provence and Dauphiné became conspicuously the theatre of hostilities rarely intermitted, between the conflicting parties, marked by various reverses of fortune. La Valette, Governor of Provence, whose activity and talents had hitherto rendered ineffectual all the exertions of the Duke of Savoy for the subjugation of that province; having been killed by a ball, while engaged in the siege of a little fortress, near the shore of the Mediterranean; his death produced a temporary confusion in the affairs of his government [x]. Charles Emanuel vainly endeavoured notwithstanding, to profit of the circumstance: his partizans having been assassinated, or expelled from the city of Arles, he evacuated Aix, and withdrew to Nice in his own dominions. The absence of the Duke of Epernon, brother and successor of La Valette, emboldened him to undertake the siege of Antibes, which surrendered after a long and generous resistance; but on the arrival of the new governor, it was again recovered for the crown of France. [y]

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Military operations in Provence.

7th Aug.

November.

Lesdiguieres, who commanded in Dauphiné, and whose military, as well as political talents, ultimately conducted him under Louis the

Lesdiguieres carries the war into Savoy.

[x] Vie de Lesdiguieres, p. 125—127. Vie d'Epernon, vol. ii. p. 1—8.

[y] Vie d'Epernon, p. 8—35.

Thir-

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Thirteenth, to the eminent dignity of Constable; not content with merely repelling the inroads of the Duke of Savoy, projected to transfer the war into the heart of his own territories. Zealously attached to the reformed religion, Lesdiguieres was not less ardently devoted to the crown; and his troops, long accustomed to victory under his auspices, thought no attempt too arduous for their courage. Assembling them for the purpose, he penetrated through the defiles of the Alps; made himself master of Perouse, and advanced to Susa, at the distance of only a few leagues from Turin. All the efforts made by Charles Emanuel in person, at the head of his bravest forces, could only impede, but did not finally prevent the progress of Lesdiguieres. In defiance of every obstacle, he constructed, and subsequently maintained possession of a fortress at Briqueras, only sixteen miles from the capital of Piedmont; repulsed an attempt made by the enemy, to scale the works; and after a campaign, equally glorious to himself, as it proved ruinous to the Duke of Savoy, he returned into Dauphiné [z]. By a singular transition in human affairs, the French name and arms, which during a period of three-and-thirty years, ever since the peace of Cateau concluded in 1559, had not been known beyond the Alps; re-appeared again in Italy with augmented lustre, under the conduct of a Hugonot.[a]

His exploits, and success.

[z] Vie de Lesdiguieres, p. 129—138.

[a] Ibid. D'Aub. vol. iii. p. 267—274, and p. 277—284. Davila, p. 1142—1191. Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 521—533. De Thou, vol. xi. p. 517—555. Chron. Nov. vol. ii. p. 49—72.

The

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The assembly of the States General, long delayed by the Duke of Mayenne, under a variety of pretences, prepared at length to meet, for the purpose of giving a sovereign to France. It is difficult to ascertain with certainty, whether their convocation on his part, was a reluctant, or a voluntary act. Under the name of Lieutenant-general of the crown, he already exercised all the great functions of the monarchical power; and therefore might naturally deprecate any experiment, by which his authority could be shaken, or subverted. But, it is not improbable that he flattered himself with directing and conducting the machine to which he was about to give birth; and that he nourished expectations of ascending the throne, as Hugh Capet had done six centuries before him. The time during which he had already occupied his high station, had enabled him to secure numerous adherents, disposed to conduce to his further aggrandizement. Paris, the place of holding the assembly, lay under his immediate influence; and if the election of a King should fall upon a native of France, he beheld no competitor who could successfully dispute with him that dignity. The impediments to a foreign prince, of whatever nation he might be, were many, great, and perhaps insurmountable. On the other hand, the Spanish ministers anxiously anticipated, and ardently pressed for the convocation of the States. They regarded it as the term of all their labours, and the consummation of their political views. Disappointed by the firmness of the Duke of Mayenne, in their

Causes of the convocation of the States General.

Motives of Mayenne,

and of the Spanish ministers.

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their intention of holding the assembly at Soissons, to which city the forces under the Duke of Parma were intended to advance, in order to overawe the deliberations; they still promised themselves equal success from its convocation in the capital.

Philip, sinking under infirmities, and approaching towards the end of life, fondly hoped to place on the vacant throne of France, his beloved daughter, the Infanta Clara Isabella; thus gratifying, before he sunk into the grave, his insatiable thirst of dominion, by transferring the French sceptre to the house of Austria. He projected to maintain the election when effected, by a vast army, and by the expenditure of proportionate treasures. Already the Duke of Parma having advanced to Arras, with intent to enter Picardy a third time, and to march towards Paris; Henry, vigilant to prevent him, repaired to Corbie on the river Somme, prepared at that place to dispute his passage. But, death, which terminated all the schemes of the Spanish general, clouded by the same stroke, the prospects of the court of Madrid. Alexander Farnese expired at Arras, exhausted by a dropsical disease against which he had vainly struggled; in the vigor of his age, having only attained his forty-seventh year. He was justly considered as the principal prop of the Spanish monarchy. The splendor of Philip's conquests in the Netherlands, and the expectation of reducing the seven revolted provinces which continued to maintain the contest, if so chimerical a hope still survived; became extinct

November.

2d Dec. Death of the Duke of Parma.

extinct with the Duke of Parma. Even before his death, Maurice, Prince of Orange, availing himself of the two successive invasions of France, which left him without an adversary in the field: expelled the Spaniards from the greater part of their possessions to the north or east of the Rhine: and he soon afterwards made himself master of Gertruydenberg, a fortress situate on the frontiers of Brabant. The Duke of Parma's decease having been long foreseen or apprehended, Philip had provided in case of that event, for the government of the Low Countries. Ernest, Count Mansfeldt, was named provisionally to the employment, till the arrival at Brussels of the Archduke Ernest, brother to the Emperor Rodolph the Second. But, the great endowments, civil no less than military, which had rendered the Duke of Parma justly respected and beloved, even when executing the tyrannical mandates of an implacable Prince, could not be easily replaced by any successor. We may even attribute in part to his death, at so critical a juncture, the consequent subversion of Philip's attempts to procure the election of the Infanta, and the final dissolution of his ambitious projects relative to France. [b]

1592.

Injurious effects of that event, to Philip the Second.

In the Manifesto or proclamation issued by the Duke of Mayenne, as Lieutenant-general of the crown, for the convocation of the States; the great purposes of their meeting were indefinitely and ambiguously described, under the general terms of "providing a remedy for the

1593. 5th Jan. Object of the convocation.

[b] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 569—572. Davila, p. 1141, 1142. Chron. Nov. vol. ii. p. 89—91. Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 533—535.

"pre-

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"preservation of religion, and the state." But, in a letter published a few days afterwards by the Cardinal of Placentia, the Papal legate, addressed to the Catholics of the opposite party; those objects were unequivocally stated to be, for the election of a "most Christian, and truly "Catholic King." It was difficult or impossible not to recognize under that designation, Philip the Second, the head and protector of "the League." Neither the number and quality of the deputies who met, nor the importance of the matters agitated in the assembly at its commencement, corresponded however to the ideas and expectations previously entertained by the nation. The delegates sent by the nobility, were few in number; while those of the third estate, mostly obscure and unknown individuals, were for the most part, men avowedly corrupted by the largesses of Spain [c]. Of the ecclesiastical order, the representatives were more numerous and eminent. Instead of proceeding without delay to fill the vacant throne, scarcely had the deliberations commenced in the palace of the Louvre, with the forms customary on so solemn an occasion, when to the astonishment of the capital, they were suddenly suspended. Matters were not yet ripe for the great and delicate measure of conferring the crown on any individual; nor had the numerous competitors adjusted their respective and clashing pretensions. The Duke of Feria, sent by Philip at the head of an embassy, with directions

Opening of the assembly.

26th Jan. Their proceedings are suspended.

[c] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 700, 701. Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 538.

to

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to propose the Infanta, waited at Soissons, in order previously to confer on the subject with the Duke of Mayenne. Even the princes of the house of Lorrain, themselves, being disunited, or bent on the prosecution of opposite schemes, for their respective personal aggrandizement; it seemed indispensable previously to adjust their jarring interests, and then to unite their efforts for the attainment of a common object. Induced by these weighty motives, the Duke of Mayenne quitting Paris, repaired to Soissons; after having taken all the precautions requisite to prevent the states from adopting in his absence, any resolutions of importance. [d]

The Catholics in the royal army, propose a conference.

The declaration, convening that assembly in his name, and by his authority, as Lieutenant-general of the crown, became however productive of a consequence, not foreseen by the zealous partizans of Spain. Instead of excluding from the national deliberations, the adherents of Henry; the Duke had expressly invited and exhorted the Catholic prelates, nobility, and officers of state attached to the sovereign, to unite themselves with the party of which he constituted the chief, in order by their joint efforts to adduce if possible, a remedy to the misfortunes of the state. This proposition, when it reached the persons to whom it was addressed, appeared to be capable, if improved, of producing effects so beneficial, that

[d] Davila, p. 1177, 1178, and p. 1192. De Thou, vol. xi. p 701. Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 537, 538.

they

CHAP. III. 1593. they almost immediately determined to avail themselves of the occasion. Having obtained the approbation and sanction of the King, whose opposition would have been found ineffectual to prevent a measure, which opened a prospect, however distant or improbable, of terminating the calamities of France; they drew up an answer to the invitation. The reply expressed in the names of all the nobility devoted to the royal cause, their readiness and disposition to send a delegation of their body, to any convenient place between Paris and St. Denis, there to confer with deputies from the adherents of "the League." A trumpet, charged to deliver the letter, was dispatched with it to the Duke of Mayenne, who had not yet quitted the capital.[e]

27th Jan.

So unexpected an overture, the result of which might prove eventually subversive of all the projects of the court of Madrid, met with violent opposition from the Spanish and Papal advocates. The Cardinal Legate stigmatized it as impious, and the college of the Sorbonne condemned it as heretical. But, the States General, to whom it was addressed, and before whom it was laid, passed a very opposite judgment on its contents. After a debate of considerable length and violence, it was decided in the assembly, that a reply should be sent to the royalist nobles; in which, tho' they protested

23d Feb. It is accepted by the States General.

[e] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 676—678, and p. 684, 685. Davila, p. 1179—1182. Memoires de Villeroy, vol. iv. p. 52—58.

their

their resolution not to acknowledge, or even to hold any communication with a heretic prince, they readily consented to the proposed conference [f]. Delays of various kinds, resulting from the unsettled state of the kingdom, and from the difficulty of fixing on a commodious place of meeting, protracted its completion. But, the village of Surenne in the vicinity of Paris, having been at length selected for the purpose, every obstacle disappeared; and precautions were taken for the reciprocal accommodation and mutual security of the members of the two parties, appointed to conduct the conference. [g]

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While these interesting propositions were agitated in the capital, the Duke of Mayenne arrived at Soissons, accompanied only by four hundred cavalry, where his presence was impatiently expected by Philip's embassadors. Disputes, heightened by acrimonious expressions, and personal recrimination, took place at their first interview. The Duke of Feria, unacquainted with the character of the French nation; imbued with erroneous ideas of the facility and certainty of the election of the Infanta; and little disposed to consider the co-operation of the chief of "the League," as indispensable to the success of his master's views on the French crown; injudiciously alienated him by marks of resentment and asperity. The measures of every description

9th Feb. Conference between Mayenne and the Spanish ministers, at Soissons.

[f] Memoires de Villeroy, vol. iv. p. 59—72.

[g] Davila, p. 1202—1208. Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 536—539. De Thou, vol. xi. p. 694—699. Memoires de Villeroy, vol. iv. p. 72—81.

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taken by the Catholic King, for ensuring the attainment of so vast an object, as the transfer of France to the House of Austria; were, notwithstanding, greatly inadequate to its value, difficulty, and importance. Neither military forces on one hand, capable of crushing the royal party; nor pecuniary funds, on the other, competent to corrupt and purchase the suffrages of the States; had been provided in time by the Court of Madrid. The Duke of Mayenne, justly irritated at the defect of ability, or of exertion on the part of the Spaniards, reproached them with such culpable and pernicious neglect, at a moment when they expected the consummation of their ambitious hopes. But, Philip was no longer in a situation to gratify the avidity, or to dazzle and subject the people, over whom his insatiable thirst of dominion made him aspire to reign. His treasures were exhausted, his finances disordered, and his revenues either anticipated or mortgaged. The veteran bands, so long accustomed to victory under the Duke of Parma, quitting their standards after his decease, desolated the provinces which they were intended to protect. Except the single city of Groningen, which still held out, scarcely any place of consequence in the northern part of the Low Countries, from the banks of the Maese to those of the Emms inclusive, remained unsubdued by the Dutch. Even in the interior of the Spanish monarchy itself, the most alarming sedition was manifested among the Arragonese; who alone of all the states to the west and south of the Pyrenees, had preserved some vestiges of

Disputes.

Inability of the King of Spain, to aid "the "League."

of their antient freedom, or their popular form of government. Vargas, who commanded a body of troops destined to enter France by way of Bayonne, was dispatched to Saragossa, for the purpose of quelling the insurrection in that city, which he did not effect without effusion of blood. In so embarrassed as well as critical a posture of his affairs, it may well be supposed that Philip could ill spare the troops and money, indispensable for placing his daughter on the French throne.[h]

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These circumstances, which, as being perfectly known to the embassadors of Spain, were even urged or enumerated by the Duke of Feria, in order to excuse the feeble and inadequate succors sent to the support of "the League," by his sovereign; were notwithstanding insufficient to moderate his conduct or to restrain the ebullitions of his resentment towards Mayenne. Mutual necessity alone, which prevented a decided rupture on both sides, produced a dissembled reconciliation. On his departure from Soissons, the Duke of Mayenne immediately joined the forces, dispatched to his aid by the new governor of the Low Countries, under the command of Charles, Count Mansfeldt. Scarcely however did they amount to about four thousand infantry, and a thousand horse; while the Papal troops were diminished to twelve hundred men. Yet so depressed was the condition of "the League," and so diminished were its resources, that their army fell below that of Spain in numbers. Un-

Imprudence, and violence of Feria.

[h] Davila, p. 1192—1197. Chron. Nov. vol. ii. p. 533—536.

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1593. March. Siege, and capture of Noyon.

able with such feeble means, to penetrate into the interior provinces of the kingdom, or to attempt the relief of the capital, by laying siege to the royal garrisons which straitened it on every side; they undertook to invest Noyon in Picardy. The town capitulated, after a siege of three weeks: but, the allies exhausted by a single effort, however successful, soon separated from each other. Mansfeldt, recalled for the protection of the Netherlands, led his forces back into Flanders; while the Duke of Mayenne repaired to Rheims, in order to concert in that city with his relatives, the princes of the house of Lorrain, the measures requisite to be pursued in so momentous a crisis. Their interview proved not less stormy, nor their consultation less discordant, than had been the conference held at Soissons. At its conclusion, the chief of "the League" returned to Paris, where his presence was become necessary, and where the aspect of affairs seemed to portend some great, as well as imminent convulsion.[i]

Mayenne returns to Paris.

Henry, during these interesting events, had been compelled by the dangerous machinations and political intrigues of his relation, the Count of Soissons, youngest of the three sons of Louis, Prince of Condé, to visit the provinces along the Loire. His absence alone had emboldened the confederate army to venture on the siege of Noyon, and he was not able to return with sufficient celerity for the preservation of the place. If the situation of the Duke of May-

[i] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 646—649. Davila, p. 1197—1200. Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 540.

enne

enne was beset with difficulties, his own position did not demand less vigor, dexterity, and decision. Near four years had already elapsed since the death of his predecessor, without any accomplishment of the assurances given by him to the Catholics at his accession, that he would cause himself to be instructed in the doctrines of the Romish faith and church. Wearied with fruitless expectation, impoverished by war, and incensed at the infraction of so solemn an engagement, the Catholics manifested a general discontent. Reproaches and complaints, which were mixed with menaces, might not improbably be followed by universal defection. Even the princes of his own family, allied to him by consanguinity; yet disgusted at his adherence to the reformed religion, or allured severally by hopes of ascending the throne in their own persons; did not conceal their resolution no longer to draw their swords, or to shed their blood, in the quarrel of an incorrigible heretic. His victories, he was sensible, might inspire terror, but could never conciliate affection; and the mutability of fortune might deprive him in an hour, of the fruits of so many battles. He beheld the States General of the kingdom actually met at Paris, for the avowed purpose of electing a sovereign: and it was obvious, that whether their choice fell on the Infanta, on the Duke of Mayenne, or on any other prince, the necessary consequence of such an elevation must be interminable civil war. It was moreover palpable, that the Hugonots were not sufficiently numerous, to counterbalance

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1593. Delicate, and dangerous situation of Henry.

Motives for his abjuration.

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balance the vast weight of rank, property, and population placed in the opposite scale; nor could he flatter himself with ever attaining a peaceable enjoyment of the crown, except by a compliance with the wishes of the majority of his subjects. Considerations at once so obvious and so weighty, were enforced by the animated remonstrances of his most confidential servants. Those individuals among the Hugonots themselves, who surveyed the King's situation without bigotry or prejudice, did not conceal from him the unavoidable necessity of a prompt and public conversion.[k]

29th April. Conferences of Surenne.

The accomplishment of that great and beneficial measure, was not a little accelerated by the result of the conferences held at Surenne, between the Catholic nobles and prelates of the two contending parties. All the exhortations of the Archbishop of Bourges, who endeavoured to awaken sentiments of loyalty and obedience to their legitimate prince, in the bosoms of the opposite faction, proved ineffectual: they unanimously declared their inflexible resolution, never to acknowledge or submit to a king, who, whatever might be his right derived from hereditary descent, remained in open hostility with the Catholic church. So bold and unambiguous a declaration, when notified to Henry, produced its full effect on his mind. Shaken on every side, and pressed by accumulating dangers; after a short hesitation, he gave a solemn assurance to convoke an assembly of the most

16th May. Henry promises to receive instruction.

[k] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 678—683. Sully, vol. i. p. 106, 107.

pious and learned ecclesiastics, for the purpose of receiving instruction. Such a promise, however equivocal it might seem, was nevertheless regarded by his adherents, as amounting to the fullest evidence of his intention to renounce the Protestant faith; and with that conviction, or under that impression, it was communicated to the delegates of "the League," at their next ensuing interview, by the Archbishop of Bourges. He accompanied the intelligence, with a proposal on the part of the King, for establishing a suspension of arms during three months; in the course of which period, measures might be embraced for effecting a general pacification.[1] CHAP. III. 1593. 17th May.

The assertions of zeal in the cause of religion, which had so long served to delude the credulous multitude, but which only concealed the private interest, ambition, or revenge by which the chiefs were actuated; appeared manifest on this occasion in their utmost turpitude and deformity. Far from expressing any satisfaction or pleasure at such a notification, the Archbishop of Lyons, who conducted the conference on the part of the deputies of "the League," received it with a mixture of surprize, concern, and incredulity. He even refused to accept from the royalist nobility and prelates, a written copy of the King's declaration; demanding permission to report the matter to the States General, who were alone competent to take cognizance of the fact, or to decide relative Conduct of the deputies of "the League," on the notification.

[1] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 750, 751. Davila, p. 1219, 1220. Memoires de Villeroy, vol. iv. p. 158—258.

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to so momentous an affair[m]. In a private council convened for the express purpose, where the Duke of Mayenne and the Cardinal-legate were personally present, it was fully agitated and discussed. The inevitable consequences of Henry's conversion might be easily foreseen, but they could not be counteracted with equal facility; and its obvious effect on the understandings of the French people, excited the liveliest apprehension. Every exertion which malignity, ingenuity, and the spirit of rebellion could inspire, were made to diminish its operation. Writings, calculated to call in question the King's sincerity, and to inflame the nation against him, artfully published, were disseminated throughout the country. At the renewal of the conferences, which were transferred from Surenne to the suburbs of Paris, the deputies of "the League" returned an answer to those of the opposite party. After expressing their satisfaction at Henry's promised submission to the Catholic church, accompanied by their wish that his conversion might prove equally sincere and permanent; they notwithstanding refused either to acknowledge his title to the crown, or even to treat with him, till he should have been absolved by the sovereign pontiff, and liberated from the ecclesiastical censures incurred by his apostacy. Nor would they even promise to aid the applications which might be made to the holy see for that purpose, nor engage to co-operate in such measures as might be adopted, for procuring the speedy reconciliation of the King with the reigning pope.

1593. Apprehensions, excited by it.

5th June. Answer made by the deputies of "the League."

[m] Memoires de Villeroy, vol. iv. p. 258—264.

The

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The proposed truce, though a measure in itself far more advantageous and necessary to "the League," under existing circumstances, than it could prove beneficial to the crown, was finally rejected; only a suspension of arms being continued for a few days in the vicinity of Paris, with a view to facilitate the conferences[n]. The royalists vainly demonstrated, that thus to submit the indefeasible sovereign rights of Henry, to the arbitrement of a foreign ecclesiastic, raised to the pontificate by the intrigues of Spain, and devoted to the interests of Philip the Second; amounted at once to a sacrifice of the independance of the monarchy, by rendering France virtually and essentially, a dependant fief of the Romish see. Not only the franchises of the Gallic church, but the honor and best interests of the kingdom itself were evidently abandoned, in order to perpetuate a civil war, the original and only pretext for which, would be extinguished by the King's conversion. Their remonstrances wholly failed of effect; and the conferences, though subsequently renewed, were found to be unproductive of any change in the determination or conduct of the chiefs of "the League."[o]

They reject the truce.

Conferences ineffectual.

But, whatever animosity might be manifested among the devoted adherents of the Duke of Mayenne, or among the corrupted partizans of the court of Madrid; a sensible, as well as salutary alteration, which had already taken

Alteration in the sentiments of the people.

[n] Memoires de Villeroy, vol. iv. p. 264—273.

[o] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 751—755, and p. 761—772. Davila, p. 1220—1222. Memoires de Villeroy, vol. iv. p. 273—317.

place,

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place, universally pervaded the inferior classes of society throughout the nation. The Parisians, extenuated by famine, and groaning under the accumulated sufferings of internal oppression, augmented by external hostility, ardently anticipated the return of peace. They had tasted however imperfectly, its blessings, during the short suspension of arms granted to facilitate the late conferences; and that precarious truce, which was limited to the immediate vicinity of the capital, only augmented their impatience for a lasting conclusion of their misfortunes. The loyal and moderate part of the citizens, long persecuted or repressed, began to exhibit marks of energy, and to elevate their tone. All the arts and machinations by which rebellion had been inculcated, and the criminal enterprizes of ambition concealed under the mask of piety, were either exhausted, or no longer inflamed the populace. In vain the Papal Legate endeavoured to sustain the declining spirit of sedition, by stigmatizing the King's conversion as an act of hypocrisy or impiety. The people, despising or resenting such attempts to prolong the national calamities, rose in a tumultuary manner, surrounded the Cardinal's palace, and loudly demanded the acceptance of the offered truce. Scarcely could the interposition of the Duke of Mayenne himself, allay the commotion, and restore a degree of tranquillity. It began to be already apparent that the foundations of "the League" were shaken, and that the completion of Henry's promised return to the Catholic

Efforts of the Legate, to maintain the party of "the League."

tholic faith, would eventually subvert a fabrick, whose only solid basis rested on private interest, personal ambition, or superstition. [p]

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Previous to these transactions, the Duke of Feria had already opened the objects of his diplomatic mission. In a select council, composed of deputies from the three orders of the States, held in presence of the Legate, at which meeting the princes of the House of Lorrain assisted, the Spanish embassador unfolded the wishes of his sovereign. After pronouncing a solemn harangue, calculated to place in the most conspicuous point of view, the eminent services rendered by Philip to the cause of religion, and the treasures lavished by him to support the party of "the League," he proposed the election to the throne, of the Infanta Clara Isabella. Mendoza, an advocate versed in the Castilian jurisprudence, was admitted to expatiate at still greater length, in the assembly of the States General, on the virtues of the Princess; and he did not omit to insist on her hereditary claim to the crown, as descended from Henry the Second, by Elizabeth, eldest of the daughters of that monarch. Finding nevertheless that the proposition excited only a negative degree of applause; and apprehensive that the French, from their adoption of the Salic law, might feel reluctance at submitting to the diminion of a female; Taxis, another member of the Spanish embassy, ventured to disclose the ulterior design of Philip, which was to bestow

20th May. Feria proposes the election of the Infanta.

29th May. Harangue of Mendoza, and of Taxis.

[p] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 772—775.

the

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the hand of the Infanta upon her cousin Ernest, Arch-duke of Austria. But, such an alliance, far from producing approbation, or conciliating the suffrages of the assembly, tended to awaken opposite sensations; and they signified without circumlocution or delay, their utter repugnance to the government of a foreign prince. Yet, desirous of manifesting their gratitude to Philip as their benefactor and protector, the States, through the channel of their head, the Duke of Mayenne, declared their readiness to place the Infanta on the throne, provided that the Catholic king her father, would consent to match her with a prince of France. The offer was accepted, after a short hesitation, by the Duke of Feria, who stipulated in the name of his sovereign, to maintain the Infanta in the possession of the crown, with all the forces of the Spanish monarchy. He promised the assembly, at the same time, that Philip would make choice of a French prince; including specially by name under that denomination, all those of the ducal family of Lorrain. [q]

22d June. Conduct of the States.

Imprudent delay of the Spaniards.

It must excite some surprize, that after so pointed a declaration, the embassadors should not have divulged the name of the object of their master's selection, without loss of time; and it appears difficult to explain their delay, on any principles of wise policy, or maxims of sound discretion. The crisis unquestionably demanded counsels of celerity and

[q] Chron. Nov. vol. ii. p. 206, 207, and p. 213. Davila, p. 1213—1218. De Thou, vol. xi. p. 775—759, and p. 777. Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 548, 549. Journal d'Henry IV., vol. i. p. 162—165, and p. 171.

decision.

decision. Henry, not accustomed to remain inactive, and availing himself of the weakness of "the League," had already assembled his forces in the vicinity of Paris. Incensed at the rejection of the truce which he had offered, and desirous of rendering the general wish for peace more ardent, by a comparison of its enjoyments with the horrors of war; he laid siege to Dreux, a city only sixteen leagues distant from the capital. That metropolis depended on it for a great part of the provisions indispensable towards the support of its numerous inhabitants. Though the garrison of Dreux made a brave defence, and held out the citadel for more than a month, they were at length reduced to capitulate[r]. No circumstance could more forcibly display the Duke of Mayenne's inability to take the field, and the total want either of power or of inclination in the Spanish court, to extend him assistance, than their passive acquiescence in the capture of a place so near to Paris. A degree of indignant ridicule was excited throughout the nation, to behold the States convened for the purpose of electing a king, while they were destitute of troops or funds for their necessary protection against a royal army, which might approach the gates, unopposed, at any moment. Indignation, blended with contempt, were felt by the wise, the loyal, and the moderate, at the contemplation of the scene exhibited before their eyes; while Spain and "the League," unable to pro-

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8th June. Siege, and capture of Dreux.

8th July.

Effects produced by it.

[r] Journal d'Henry IV., vol. i. p. 176. De Thou, vol. xii. 1—7. Davila, p. 1223, 1225.

long

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long the war, yet rapidly declining in strength, contended for the possession of an imaginary crown.

1593.

Conduct of the Parliament of Paris.

In the midst of these transactions, the parliament of Paris, which since the execution of Brisson and his colleagues, had given scarcely any indication of its existence as a political body, suddenly assembled, in order to deliberate on the critical state of public affairs. Animated by sentiments of independance, no less than of attachment to their country, the members unanimously determined and enjoined, that an immediate remonstrance should be presented in their name, and by their authority, to the Duke of Mayenne. Every line breathed the spirit of patriotism, untainted by superstition, and undebased by faction. The president delivered their resolution in a manner becoming the dignity of the assembly. In it they besought the Duke not to consent to any treaty subversive of the fundamental laws of the kingdom, or calculated to transfer the sceptre to a foreign prince or princess: they reminded him of the sanctity and majesty of the office delegated to him, as "Lieutenant-general of the crown;" and they annulled all agreements tending to abolish, or to invalidate the Salic law, which expressly excluded females from being placed on the throne of France. Notwithstanding the real, or affected resentment expressed by the chief of "the League," at so manly and unexpected an interference; the parliament sustained with firmness its right of remonstrating, and appeared neither terrified by the menaces,

28th June.

Their remonstrance to Mayenne.

His reply.

nor

nor depressed by the opposition, of the devoted adherents of Spain.[s] CHAP. III.

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During the interval of more than three weeks, which considerable period elapsed between the declaration of Philip's embassadors, that the Catholic King would make choice of a French Prince for the husband of the Infanta, and the disclosure of the fortunate individual selected by him; Paris became a theatre of intrigue, rivality, expectation, and cabal. The numerous candidates of the family of Lorrain, who devoured in hope the future diadem, counteracting mutually each other's pretensions, anxiously strove for preference in the cabinet of Madrid. The Duke of Nemours, relying on his birth, and still more on his personal merits during the memorable siege of the capital, when he had displayed the greatest resources; thought the crown due to his eminent services. He was opposed by the Duke of Mayenne; who, though unable himself to espouse the Spanish Princess, did not the less wish to obtain the hand of Clara Isabella for his own son, the young Duke of Aiguillon. A third competitor presented himself in the person of the Cardinal of Lorrain, second son to Charles, the reigning Duke of Lorrain. But all their claims were lost in the superior merits of the Duke of Guise, who pleading his father's and his grandfather's sufferings in the cause of the Catholic religion, inherited their courage as well as their ambition,

Intrigues for the crown.

Competitors.

[s] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 780—787. Jour. d'Henry IV. vol. i. p. 173 175. Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 550, 551. Davila, p. 1231—1233.

together

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together with the adherence of the most zealous partizans of "the League." [t]

1593. 14th July. Feria names the Duke of Guise.

Philip's emissaries at length breaking the silence in which they had so injudiciously persisted, at a moment when every motive dictated decision, disclosed his ultimate intentions. In a council held for the purpose, the Duke of Feria having produced the powers entrusted to him, declared that his sovereign's choice had fallen on the Duke of Guise. He proposed, at the same time, that the crown should be jointly conferred on him and the Spanish Princess; accompanying the demand with every stipulation which could secure the liberties of the nation: adding likewise assurances of such effectual pecuniary and military support on the part of the Catholic King, as must speedily extinguish all opposition. Mortified at the preference given to his nephew, and the exclusion of his son; indignant at the conduct of Philip, and determined not to lay down the supreme power of which he was in possession; the Duke of Mayenne nevertheless dissembled his chagrin. He even returned his acknowledgements to the Spanish monarch, for the honor done to the House of Lorrain, in the person of the Duke of Guise; promising to give the proposition his warmest support in the assembly of the States. Bassompierre, the minister of the Duke of Lorrain to "the League," having dextrously obtained the delay of a few days, under pretence of acquainting his master with a piece of intelligence so important, the interval was

Conduct, and delays of Mayenne.

[t] De Thou, vol. xi. p. 778, 779. Davila, p. 1218.

im-

improved by the Duke of Mayenne. Already, in the anticipation of his certain and approaching elevation to the French throne, the young Duke of Guise beheld himself surrounded with a numerous court; while the Lieutenant-general of the crown, whose authority was considered as nearly extinct, attracting no longer any attention, was almost universally abandoned by his late followers. The Spaniards, accused of inspiring the future King elect, with sentiments of enmity or revenge against his uncle, as forming the only obstacle to his greatness; were said to have proposed to Guise, the assassination of Mayenne. [u]

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Their imaginary triumph proved of short duration, and the influence of the Duke of Mayenne in the assembly of the States, speedily subverted the chimerical machinations of the cabinet of Madrid. After having vainly endeavoured to induce the embassadors to postpone to a more favorable juncture, their intention of filling the throne, he next attempted to work upon the Duke of Guise himself. Having fully demonstrated to that young and ambitious prince, the inanity of those expectations which he had so eagerly imbibed; he earnestly besought of his nephew, not to advance further in the prosecution of a plan, which must produce consequences equally ruinous to himself, to his family, and to "the League." But, the vision of a crown having rendered

He counteracts the Spanish ministers.

[u] Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 551, 552. Jour. d'Henry IV., vol. i. p. 177, 178. De Thou, vol. xii. p. 7—11. Davila, p. 1226.

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him insensible or averse to every admonition, though he did not refuse to listen with decent respect to his uncle's remonstrances; Mayenne, repulsed in both his applications, determined finally to make his appeal to the States. His personal authority and weight in the assembly, which enabled him to counteract all opposition, procured the indirect rejection of the late proposal. By a considerable majority it was decided, humbly to return their acknowledgements to the Catholic king for his gracious declaration; to assure him of their readiness to accept it, by raising to the throne the Duke of Guise and the Infanta, at a more propitious period; but that, from the recent success of the enemy before Dreux, and the defenceless state of "the League," its accomplishment must be deferred to another opportunity. They concluded, by entreating that the forces of Philip might speedily advance into the interior provinces of France, in order to facilitate and accelerate the election. Severe as was the disappointment felt by the Spanish embassadors, at so humiliating a reply; sensible as they were of the quarter from whence the blow was dealt; and conscious that all their hopes were destroyed in the very moment of their expected completion; they nevertheless preserved a perfect Castilian gravity. While in temperate and moderate language, they lamented that the States had not embraced the only expedient, calculated to terminate the calamities of France; they still promised the protection and aid of

20th July. The States postpone the election of a king.

Behaviour of the embassadors of Philip.

their master, provided that no truce should be concluded with the King of Navarre.[x] CHAP. III.

1593. Reflections on the election of a king by the States.

It seems scarcely to admit of any doubt, that the habitual and insurmountable delays of the Spanish ministers, principally conduced to the unsuccessful close of the negotiation. Instead of protracting and concealing the Duke of Guise's election as they did; if they had named him for the object of Philip's choice, at an earlier period, they must incontrovertibly have succeeded in raising him, at least nominally, to the throne. The Duke of Mayenne, who had been detained first before Noyon, and afterwards at Rheims; was not master of the deliberations and suffrages of the States, on his first arrival in the metropolis[y]. On the other hand, Henry, whatever promises he had made to abjure the reformed religion, remaining still unreconciled to the Romish church; to such a point had arisen the indignation or the disgust of the Catholic nobility in his service, that if the Duke of Guise had been then declared King, it was not questioned, he would have been joined and supported by all the royalists attached to the antient faith[z]. Under these circumstances, it is clear that Philip might have placed the crown on the head of his daughter; and a new Dynasty of princes might have arisen in France, on the extinction of the Capetian line. The Hugonots alone, could neither have raised the King of Navarre to the French throne, nor have main-

[x] De Thou, vol. xii. p. 22—25. Jour. d'Henry IV., vol. i. p. 178, 179. Davila, p. 1227—1231. Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 552, 553.

[y] Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 546, 547.

[z] Ibid. vol. ix. p. 541, 542, and p. 549, 550.

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tained him on it; and his abjuration would have been made too late for producing any beneficial effect. The house of Austria in its different branches, would on such a supposition, have reigned over Europe, from the shores of the Atlantic ocean, almost uninterruptedly to the distant confines of Turkey; and from the coast of Morocco, north to the Elbe, the Rhine, and the British channel. Philip, after recently subjecting Portugal and all its colonies in the two hemispheres, would have beheld France voluntarily submit to his empire; in violation of the supposed sanctity of the Salic law, consenting to substitute a female and a foreigner in the place of their native princes. The fairest portion of Europe might have groaned under Castilian tyranny: the tribunal of the Inquisition might have been established at Paris, as it was at Lisbon, or at Madrid; and the universal monarchy, so dreaded under Louis the Fourteenth, would have been in some measure realized. We have seen the complete subjugation of the European continent still more nearly and more completely effected in our own time, by a Corsican soldier seated on the throne of Louis the Sixteenth; in comparison with whose crimes and atrocities, the ambition and bigotry of Philip, however sanguinary, were innoxious, or only productive of partial calamity.

Henry prepares to abjure the reformed religion.

The attention of the French people, which had so long been directed to the cabals of a popular assembly, or to the machinations of Faction and rebellion, became now more pleasingly attracted by a spectacle of a different nature.

nature. The King, after long hesitation, prepared at length to consummate the promised change of his religion, and thereby to extinguish the great source of popular insurrection. Every preparatory circumstance which could add decency and dignity to the act itself, or could impress the nation with a sense of his sincere conviction, accompanied the ceremony. Theologians, and divines of all descriptions, selected even from among the most furious, or zealous adherents of "the League," were exhorted and summoned to attend on the occasion. Several of the latter description assisted, in defiance of the Anathemas of the papal legate, and the prohibitions of the Duke of Mayenne. Henry listened with patient and docile submission, to their instructions and admonitions, during many hours, in repeated conferences. He had always expressed the greatest doubts upon three essential articles of the Romish faith; auricular confession; the invocation of saints; and the spiritual authority of the holy see. Having heard the arguments adduced in their defence or justification, he rose up; thanked the ecclesiastics for their pious exertions, as well as for the lights which they had given him; and added, that after having invoked the Divine assistance, he would determine seriously on taking a final resolution, salutary to himself, as well as to the state [a]. Some objections, made by the Cardinal of Bourbon, to the competency of any power

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Conferences on matters of faith.

23d July.

[a] Jour. d'Henry IV., vol. i. p. 180, 181. De Thou, vol. xii. p. 30, 31. Chron. Nov. vol. ii. p. 221, 222.

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except the Pope, to absolve the King, and to receive him into the bosom of the Catholic church, were overruled. Personal ambition, not piety or principle, had dictated the scruples of that factious prelate, who still retained hopes of ascending the throne, either by the assistance of the Duke of Mayenne, now become disgusted with Spain, or by the efforts of the bigotted Catholics in his favour. His faint opposition, together with his impotent malignity, excited only contempt; while the nation at large anticipated Henry's return to the papal obedience, as the signal and seal of future felicity. [b]

Opposition of the Cardinal of Bourbon.

25th July. Abjuration of the King, at St. Denis.

The necessary preparations having been made for celebrating with due dignity and solemnity, so august a ceremony; Henry, unable to make his abjuration in the metropolitan church of "Notre Dame" at Paris, chose for its performance, the neighbouring abbey of St. Denis: a religious structure venerable for its sanctity and antiquity, but peculiarly sacred as being the repository of the royal remains of the kings of the Capetian race. On the day appointed, presenting himself, habited in white, before the portal of the edifice, accompanied by the princes of the blood, nobility, and gentry; he was followed by the guards superbly accoutred. The Archbishop of Bourges, seated, and surrounded by a number of prelates, met him at his entrance. Holding in his hands a book of the Gospels open, he demanded of Henry who he was, and the nature of his errand. "I am

Ceremony, and solemnities.

[b] De Thou, vol. xii. p. 25, 26, and p. 30.

"the

" the King," replied he, " who desire to be re- CHAP.
" ceived into the bosom of the Catholic, Apos- III.
" tolic, and Romish church." Throwing him- 1593.
self on his knees, he then protested to live and die in its defence, renouncing all heresies contrary to its doctrines. Having signed his profession of faith, and made confession, the Archbishop next administered to him absolution. Mass being lastly solemnized, at which service the King assisted under a canopy of state; after its conclusion he returned, amidst the joyful acclamations of an immense multitude, to the monastery of St. Denis, where he dined in public. Money was scattered among the populace; and notwithstanding the manifest danger which he incurred of assassination, Henry admitted indiscriminately every individual among the croud to approach his person. In vain the Duke of Mayenne having issued the most rigorous orders, with a view to prevent the inhabitants of Paris from being present at the ceremony, caused the gates of the capital to be kept shut during the whole day. Nor were the declamations of the factious preachers, whose influence over the people had been hitherto so unlimited, any longer able to restrain the testimonies of popular curiosity and loyalty. They attended in such numbers, as even to exceed those of the royal party, and joined in the universal testimonies of joy, or of exultation. It could no longer be doubted that from the moment of Henry's abjuration, the foundations of " the League" being sapped; only the operation of time was necessary, to

Its beneficial consequences.

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reclaim the deluded followers of superstition and rebellion. [c]

1593. Examination of, and reflections on the act.

If we examine the act itself, by the maxims of policy, or the rules of prudence and state necessity; we must pronounce it to have been dictated by imperious circumstances, replete with wisdom. In a moral view, it was productive of happiness or repose to a great portion of mankind, as it tended more than any other circumstance to abbreviate, and finally to extinguish, the calamities of civil discord. As a private case of conscience, it does not properly belong to history to decide upon its merit, which can only be amenable to a higher jurisdiction than any earthly tribunal. The zealous adherents of the reformed religion, his contemporaries, naturally considered it as a measure of state, in which truth, sincerity, and religious principle, had been sacrificed to views of public convenience, or to motives of personal ambition [d]. But posterity, more just, more enlightened, and more impartial, after weighing the action in other scales, has acquitted, if not applauded Henry for his abjuration. Even many of the Hugonots themselves, who possessed enlarged minds, negatively admitted its propriety, and warmly desired or advanced its accomplishment [e]. At the King's express request, the profession of faith tendered to him

[c] Chron. Nov. vol. ii. p. 222—224. Jour. d'Henry IV., vol. i. p. 181—184. Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 553—555. De Thou, vol. xii. p. 32—35. Davila, p. 1236, 1237.

[d] Memoires d'Aubigné, p. 136, and p. 138. Vie de du Plessis Mornay, p. 195—198.

[e] Davila, p. 1184.

at

at St. Denis, was conceived in general and indefinite terms; omitting all those Dogmas, or points of polemical theology, calculated rather to embarrass and obscure, than to illuminate his mind[f]. It forms a matter of curious remark, that the scruples or doubts of Henry were more directed to the minor articles of the Romish creed, than to the great and most essential points. On three of inferior consequence, already enumerated, he hesitated: but when the sacrament of the altar, or in other words, transubstantiation was agitated; which as including the doctrine of the real presence in the elements of bread and wine, appears to us most revolting or opposed to common sense, he said to the prelates, "I have no doubt upon this "head; for I have always so believed[g]." Must we impute his assent to policy, or to real conviction?

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However that fact may be, on which no certainty can be obtained, his abjuration was followed in a few days, by a truce for three months, agreed on between the deputies of the royal party, and those of "the League." All the clamors of the Legate, sustained by the opposition of the Spanish embassadors, could neither prevent, nor retard its completion. Necessity and inability pleaded in favor of the Duke of Mayenne; who, destitute of every means to continue the war, beheld the only solid pretext for its prosecution now withdrawn, by Henry's return to the obedience of the Catholic church.

31st July. Truce made between Henry, and "the League."

[f] Vie de du Plessis, p. 198. Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 554.
[g] Chron. Nov. vol. i. p. 222.

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church [h]. In this critical situation, he again renewed his alliance with the court of Madrid, engaging never to acknowledge the King's title, under any possible circumstances; while Philip stipulated on the other part, to march without delay, a considerable army to his aid. Mutual distress, which cemented the confederation, animated them to new efforts for sustaining the contest. [i]

1593. Mayenne renews his alliance with Spain.

Prorogation of the States General.

As the States General were found to be no longer necessary, when the project of electing a king was postponed to an uncertain period, Mayenne judged it proper to dismiss the assembly. Though nominally prorogued only to the ensuing month of October, they might be considered as virtually dissolved. Previous to their separation, an oath being administered on the part of the Lieutenant-general of the crown, was taken by the deputies, binding themselves to obey implicitly the decrees and decisions of the holy see, in all matters relating to heresy. A vain hope was entertained, by so frail an engagement, to prop the declining cause of rebellion; and as the convocation of the States might again become requisite, the Spanish monarch retained at his own expence, a considerable number of the members, who continued to reside at Paris, till the final submission of that metropolis to its legitimate sovereign. [k]

8th Aug.

[h] Mem. de Villeroy, vol. iv. p. 320—351.

[i] Jour. d'Henry IV., vol. i. p. 185, 186. Davila, p. 1237. Chron. Nov. vol. ii. p. 226—229.

[k] De Thou, vol. xii. p. 35—38. Chron. Nov. vol. ii. p. 229—233. Journal d'Henry IV., vol. i. p. 185—188. Mem. de Villeroy, vol. iv. p. 352—368.

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State of France, after the King's abjuration. — Embassy sent to Rome. — Seizure of Barriere. — Effects of the truce. — Situation of Mayenne. — Ill success of the Duke of Nevers, at Rome. — Decline of "the League." — Submission of various cities, to Henry. — His coronation. — Brissac made governor of Paris. — He treats with the King. — Reduction of Paris. — Measures embraced by Henry, for the restoration of order in the metropolis. — Rouen returns to its allegiance. — Mayenne repairs to Brussels. — System of Philip the Second. — Siege, and capture of Laön. — State of affairs in Burgundy. — Hostilities in Brittany. — Transactions in Provence, and in Savoy. — Submission of the Duke of Guise. — Attempt of Chatel to assassinate the King. — Banishment of the Jesuits. — Henry declares war on Spain. — Death of the Duke of Nemours. — Revolt of Burgundy from Mayenne. — Henry repairs to Dijon. — Combat of Fontaine Françoise. — Mayenne quits the Spaniards. — Return of the King to Lyons. — Truce made with Mayenne.

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1593. August. Effect of the truce,

THE effect produced on the hearts, as well as on the understandings of the French nation, by the late events, which had succeeded each other with such rapidity, was necessarily proportioned to their magnitude and importance. No circumstance could more clearly and forcibly demonstrate the misunderstanding, or rather alienation subsisting between the head of "the League," and the court of Spain, than the trans-

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transactions which had taken place during the convocation of the States General. That assembly, called together for the express purpose of filling the vacant throne, had not only expressed their unanimous indignation at the proposal of chusing the Arch-duke Ernest for sovereign: they had postponed to a distant and uncertain period, the less odious proposition of conferring the crown on the Infanta, jointly with a Prince of the house of Lorrain. The truce recently concluded between the King and the Duke of Mayenne, could not fail to become productive of a great and general change, in the dispositions of every order of men. Paris, long subjected to all the calamities of famine, beheld itself by this suspension of hostilities, placed in a state of temporary freedom and emancipation. The inhabitants, immured during four successive years within the walls of a deserted, depopulated capital, eagerly embraced the occasion of breathing a purer air, and of revisiting their desolated estates or ravaged possessions. Henry's character, as it became more fully known throughout France, inspired equal attachment and veneration. The courtesy of his manners, the facility with which he admitted the meanest individuals to approach and accost him, the liberality which he displayed in relieving their wants, together with the compassionate sympathy that he testified for their sufferings, of which he was in some degree the involuntary cause; — these unequivocal testimonies of beneficence, made a deep

and of the King's conduct.

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and universal impression. His recent abjuration, which had been conducted with every circumstance calculated to give solemnity to the act, and to imprint on the minds of the Catholics an opinion of the King's sincerity; by disarming in a great degree "the League," deprived its adherents of their last support.[a] CHAP. IV. 1593.

He sends the Duke of Nevers, to Rome.

Sensible nevertheless, that while he remained still unabsolved from the Papal censures, the bigotted and the disaffected part of the nation, could never want a pretext for rebellion; Henry determined not to lose a moment, in attempting to effect his reconciliation with the Apostolic see. Louis de Gonzaga, Duke of Nevers, was selected to carry the assurances of his filial obedience and contrition, to the feet of the sovereign pontiff. His near alliance and descent from the reigning house of Mantua, his Italian origin, combined with his high character, and recognized ability, rendered him peculiarly adapted for successfully negociating in the court of Rome. Several prelates eminent for virtue and loyalty, or distinguished by talents and eloquence, were associated with him in so delicate, as well as arduous a commission. They began their journey without delay; while the King improving the favorable occasion of tranquillity, advanced his cause not less by the silent exertions of his partizans, than he had done during the continuance of open hostilities, by his personal activity and valor. Remaining nevertheless in the vicinity of the me-

[a] Davila, p. 1241, 1242.

tropolis,

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tropolis, attentive to every movement in the interior of Paris, and ready to avail himself of any event which might facilitate, or accelerate its surrender; he waited with patient confidence, for the effect of that fermentation, with which the capital and the kingdom were equally agitated. [b]

These flattering appearances of returning order, were notwithstanding, on the point of being extinguished by one of those atrocious attempts which peculiarly characterize the period of the civil wars of France; and to another of which, more successfully executed, Henry became ultimately a victim. A man of the lowest description, named Barriere, impelled by a spirit of gloomy and sanguinary fanaticism, conceived the design of assassinating the King. In order to execute his purpose, having set out from Lyons, he crossed all the intermediate provinces between that city and Paris; arrived at St. Denis, and followed the court to the town of Melun, with intent to strike the blow. Fortunately, the scruples which arose in his mind, relative to the moral rectitude of the act, induced him to communicate his resolution to various ecclesiastics. One of them, after having expressed his disapprobation of so flagitious an intention, finding that Barriere remained inflexible, contrived to anticipate its execution, by sending intelligence of it to the King. Being seized, and interrogated, he was put to death; but his punishment did not deter

Design of Barriere.

[b] De Thou, vol. xii. p. 38, 39. Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 556. Chron. Nov. vol. ii. p. 233, 234.

others

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others from similar enterprizes, which were encouraged by the spirit of the age, and fomented by the zealous adherents of "the League." [c]

1593. Suspension of hostilities, in the provinces.

Throughout all the provinces of France, a temporary cessation of hostilities having taken place, in consequence of the truce concluded between Henry and Mayenne; the Duke of Mercœur, who was occupied in the siege of Moncontour, desisted from its further prosecution, as did the royalists in like manner, from the attack of Poitiers. Even in the centre of the Alps, the operations of war were suspended; where Charles Emanuel, Duke of Savoy, voluntarily accepted the armistice, of which from the declining state of his affairs, he stood in the greatest need. He had already renounced his expectations of subjecting Provence, on account of the inconstancy of the people, and the progress made by the Duke of Epernon, which scarcely left him any acquisition. In Dauphiné, Lesdiguieres not only repelled his invasion of the province; but that active commander transferring the seat of war into his own dominions, defeated a considerable body of Spaniards, and at length reduced the Duke to abandon all his views of foreign conquest. [d]

Embarrassment of Mayenne.

While in every quarter, the aspect of Henry's affairs promised a speedy and fortunate conclu-

[c] Jour. d'Henry IV., vol. i. p. 190, 191. De Thou, vol. xii. p. 49—52. Chron. Nov. vol. ii. p. 238—241. Davila, p. 1262—1264.

[d] Vie de Lesdigue. p. 139—145. Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 557—560. De Thou, vol. xii. p. 56—72. Guichenon. Hist. de Savoye, vol. i. p. 741—746.

sion

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sion of the war; the Duke of Mayenne, beset with augmenting difficulties, from which it appeared almost impossible that he should extricate himself with honor or advantage, beheld on all sides either secret defection, or open revolt. The ministers of Philip the Second loaded him with reproaches, and that prince himself regarded him with distrust. The pontifical treasury was shut to his demands; and far from imitating the example of Gregory the Fourteenth his predecessor, Clement began to betray a secret inclination to withdraw from "the League," even his spiritual support. Paris, which manifested alarming symptoms of a disposition to change its master, could with difficulty be retained in subjection by Mayenne. Even the princes of his own family, disunited among themselves, and divided in opinion, encreased his embarrassments. The Duke of Lorrain, weary of the war, and anxious to prevent the passage of new armies through his territories, inclined to embrace pacific measures. The Duke of Mercœur, who commanded in Brittany, scarcely owned any subjection to Mayenne, or acted in any concert with him. Henry, the young Duke of Guise, conscious that his uncle had imposed insuperable obstacles to the proposed marriage between him and the Infanta, as well as thrown impediments in the way of his elevation to the throne; only observed the external forms of respect towards a relation, whom he considered as a rival and an enemy. The Duke

Duke of Nemours throwing off all restraint, displayed his intention of erecting an independant principality on the banks of the Rhone. Seduced by the maxims of Machiavel, and intoxicated with ideal prospects of ambition, he endeavoured to render himself master of all the provinces which extend from the borders of Dauphiné on the east, to the western limits of Auvergne, comprehending one of the richest central tracts of France. As Lyons was destined to be the capital of this new feudal sovereignty, he had already surrounded the city with forts and garrisons, in order to awe the inhabitants. His ill-digested and chimerical plans were speedily subverted by the revolt of the people; who, being secretly stimulated by the Duke of Mayenne, seized on Nemours, and confined him in the castle of Pierre Encise, the citadel of Lyons. Little benefit accrued nevertheless, to the head of "the League," from his brother's imprisonment; as the inhabitants, thus liberated from the tyranny of their governor, maintained themselves in a state of independance, till their final submission to the King.[c]

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21st Sep. Imprisonment of the Duke of Nemours.

Pressed by so many domestic misfortunes, the Duke of Mayenne solicited and obtained, not without difficulty and repugnance on the part of Henry, a prolongation of the truce for the short term of two months. The attention of both parties became fixed on the event of

October. Truce prolonged.

[c] De Thou, vol. xii. p. 53—56. Davila, p. 1253—1255. Chron. Nov. vol. ii. p. 242—249. Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 562, 563.

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the Duke of Nevers's embassy, the failure of which mission could alone perpetuate the duration of "the League." That prince, previous to his arrival in the Papal territories, received

November.

the most specific notification of the ill success which would attend his exertions. His reception at Rome, altogether unworthy the powerful sovereign whom he represented, confirmed these representations. All his arguments, entreaties, and expostulations, far from making any impression on the mind of the Pope, could not induce him to revoke the excommunication. After many weeks of fruitless and reiterated application, Nevers, therefore, indignant at a treatment so unbecoming the paternal character of the head of the Christian world, quitted Rome, and set out on his return to France. The apparent reluctance of Clement to receive Henry into the communion of the Catholic church, was nevertheless wholly involuntary, and the result of political necessity. Surrounded by the Cardinals of the Spanish faction, he dreaded the resentment of so vindictive a prince as Philip the Second, the arbiter of Italy. The cause of "the League" was besides so artfully implicated with the interests of religion, as to appear almost inseparable from them; while on the other hand, Henry's conversion might prove feigned or temporary. Under these circumstances, it became the dignity, as well as the decorum of the Apostolic see, to proceed with caution and circumspection, in so momentous a concern. Clement demonstrated by his subsequent

Ill success of Nevers, at Rome.

quent conduct, that when fully justified in his proceeding, he neither felt political animosity nor personal enmity towards the King.[f]

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1593. December.

But, however unsuccessful Henry's embassador had proved in his negotiation at Rome, neither the efforts of the Duke of Mayenne, nor those of Philip the Second, could prolong the existence, or prop the declining cause of faction and rebellion. The nation, exhausted by many years of civil war, impatiently desired the return of peace: while the vast fabrick of "the League," originally formed by the indolent pusillanimity of Henry the Third, cemented by the blood of the princes of Guise which was shed at Blois, and perpetuated by ambition under the mask of religion, began to dissolve under its own weight. The discordant, and heterogeneous materials of which it was composed, were no longer held together by any common principle of union. The assistance of Spain was precarious, uncertain, and distant; while the danger that menaced, was imminent and immediate. Henry, conscious of his own strength, and aware of the weakness of his enemies, refused to listen to any overtures for a further prolongation of the truce. Already, various places which had manifested the greatest devotion to the Duke of Mayenne, quitting him in the decline of his fortune, made terms of composition with the King.

Causes of the declension of "the League."

[f] Mem. de Nevers, vol. ii. p. 405—433. Davila, p. 1243—1253. De Thou, vol. xii. p. 74—98. Chron. Nov. vol. ii. p. 251—267.; and vol. iii. p. 310—316.

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1593. Submission of Balagny.

Fescamp, a maritime town, situate on the coast of Normandy, led the way; and its voluntary surrender was followed by the more important submission of the city of Cambray. Balagny, who commanded in the place with absolute authority, ever since the death of the Duke of Alenson, by whom it was originally captured from the Spaniards; having maintained himself since that time, during nine years, in a species of independance, projected to transmit the territory of the Cambresis, with its capital, to his posterity, as a fief or principality relieving only of the crown of France. Henry, desirous to secure on any terms, so valuable a place, which might afford him an easy entrance into Flanders, granted Balagny the most favorable and ample conditions. [g]

The spirit of loyalty which had been so long repressed, seemed at this period to revive in every part of the kingdom; and it was strengthened by the facility of obtaining from the crown, in its present state of weakness, almost any demand, however extravagant or unjust in its nature. Vitry, who had given the first, and almost the only example of defection in the royal army, after the assassination of Henry the Third, exhibited one of the earliest proofs of spontaneous obedience. Irritated by the detention of the sums of public money due to him, and no longer apprehensive for the safety of the Catholic religion, since the King's abjuration;

Vitry returns to his allegiance.

[g] Mezeray, vol. ix. p. 563. Chron. Nov. vol. ii. p. 268, 269.

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he openly quitted the party of "the League," and induced the inhabitants of Meaux to expel their troops from the place. That city, by its position on the river Marne, and its vicinity to Paris, augmenting the distress of the metropolis for provisions, accelerated its eventual surrender. Scarcely could the presence and exertions of the Duke of Mayenne, prevent the effects of so contagious a spirit, or quell the discontents of the parliament; which venerable assembly, strongly imbued with sentiments of allegiance and loyalty, manifested in unambiguous terms, a disposition to receive the King. Apprehensive that the Count de Belin, Governor of Paris, was secretly inclined towards the same measure, Mayenne, regardless of the remonstrances or entreaties of the Parisians, deprived him of his office. At the recommendation of the Spanish ministers, he confided that important charge to Brissac, on whose fidelity they thought that they might rely with implicit confidence. The event nevertheless proved that they were deceived in their selection [h]. From the shore of the Mediterranean, across a great portion of France, extending in a north-west direction, quite to the banks of the Loire, Henry received the most flattering testimonies of voluntarily submission. Aix, capital of Provence, invested by the forces of Epernon, declared itself in the obedience of the crown; and the inhabitants of Lyons having called to

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1594. 24th Dec.

3d Jan.

[h] Chron. Nov. vol. iii. p. 295, 296.

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their assistance Ornano, one of the royal generals, proclaimed the King with acclamations. La Chatre, who commanded in Orleans, assembling the inhabitants, soon disposed them to return to their duty. The surrender of a place, which from the contagious effect of its example had greatly influenced the conduct of the Parisians, in their original revolt from Henry the Third; and which city constituted the only passage across the Loire possessed by "the League;" produced the most beneficial consequences. Animated with the same spirit, the central province of Berry, together with Bourges the capital, abandoned the Duke of Mayenne.[1]

1594. 25th Jan. Submission of various places. 17th Feb.

Inauguration of the King.

Anxious to avail himself of the favorable change operated in the dispositions of the people, while he was desirous at the same time to augment their veneration for his person and dignity, Henry determined to cause his inauguration to be performed without delay. Prescription, so forcible in its empire over the minds of men, had confined exclusively to Rheims, for several successive ages, the ceremony of consecrating the French kings; the vial which contained the sacred oil used in anointing them, being preserved in that city. Charles the Seventh had been thus triumphantly conducted to Rheims by the Maid of Orleans, when she

[1] De Thou, vol. xii. p. 107—123. Chron. Nov. vol. ii. p. 272—276.; and vol. iii. p. 295—310. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 1—5. Davila, p. 1264—1268. Jour. d'Henry IV., vol. i. p. 199, 200, and p. 212—219.

expelled

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1594. 27th Feb.

expelled the English from so large a portion of France, early in the preceding century. But as the place still adhered pertinaciously to "the League," it became indispensable to select some other city for the celebration of the solemnity. After mature deliberation, Chartres was ultimately preferred; and a vial whose origin was no less supernatural in the popular estimation, as well as the virtues attributed to it equally miraculous, being obtained from the abbey of Marmoutier near Tours, the ceremony was soon afterwards performed with all the magnificence becoming the occasion.[k]

State of Paris.

Undermined by internal disaffection, and attacked by external force, the Duke of Mayenne began to experience in its utmost extent, the instability of fortune. All his exertions, though aided by the largesses of Spain, and supported by a foreign garrison composed of Walloons, Neapolitans, and Germans, whom he introduced into Paris; could not sustain his declining cause, nor long protract the submission of the capital to its lawful sovereign. Repeatedly warned that Brissac, the new governor, was already negociating to deliver up the place to Henry, he despised or neglected the admonition. His presence, by imposing some restraint on the loyal part of the inhabitants, prevented during a considerable time any open insurrection against his authority. But,

[k] Chron. Nov. vol. iii. p. 317—332. De Thou, vol. xii. p. 123—129. Jour. d'Hen. IV., vol. i. p. 220—222.

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no sooner had the necessity of concerting the operations of the approaching campaign, compelled him to quit the metropolis than his absence facilitated its surrender. The enterprize was nevertheless arduous, dangerous, and uncertain in its result. Brissac, surrounded by spies, who watched all his motions with jealous suspicion, and whose vigilance no dissimulation could circumvent, found himself long unable to accomplish the object. The Duke of Feria and his colleagues retained, by continual distributions of money, a great number of adherents among the inferior classes of the people, who were devoted to Philip the Second. That monarch was not less zealously aided by the Cardinal-legate, by the declamations of the ecclesiastics, and by the remains of the powerful faction of the "Sixteen," which body had been humbled, but not extinguished, by the Duke of Mayenne. [1]

1594. 6th March. Mayenne quits the capital.

Brissac treats with the King.

In defiance of these impediments, Brissac having previously stipulated for the preservation of all the municipal privileges of the capital, for the pardon and oblivion of every offence committed against the late, or the present government, and for the unmolested retreat of the foreign troops stationed in Paris; agreed to admit the royal forces into the place. Henry, induced not more by the natural placability of his character, than by policy, to prevent the effusion of blood, and the inevitable

[1] Davila, p. 1280. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 7, 8. Chron. Nov. vol. iii. p. 297.

pillage

pillage of the metropolis which must have followed its capture; readily consented to every demand. The only remaining difficulty consisted in concealing the design till the moment of its execution, and in lulling asleep the apprehensions of those persons who were interested to betray, or to oppose the measure. Having communicated his intention to such members of the parliament of Paris, as he knew to be devoted to the crown, and on whose co-operation he could confide; a day was fixed by Brissac, for opening the gates. Henry, favoured by the night, having advanced at the head of his army, appeared in the suburbs. The wise precautions embraced by the Governor, for securing the completion of his project, were aided by the interposition of fortune. Before any measures for opposing by force the entry of the King, could be concerted or executed on the part of the Spaniards; the troops which had silently entered Paris, seizing on the principal avenues, rendered themselves masters of the arsenal, the Louvre, and the bridges across the Seine. Scarcely any attempt at resistance was made, except by a body of German Landsquenets, whom Marshal Matignon having caused to be attacked, put to the sword. The Neapolitans and Walloons remained motionless in their quarters, passive spectators of so vast and important a transaction, as the transfer of the capital from "the League," to a new master.

Royal troops admitted.

22d Mar.

In the midst of this extraordinary scene, which resembled rather the peaceful spectacle of

Entrance of Henry into Paris.

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of a triumphal entry, than the reduction of a rebellious metropolis; Henry advancing, was met by Brissac, who presented him the keys of Paris. He was rewarded with almost every mark of favor or gratitude, which so distinguished a service merited from the sovereign. That prince continuing his progress, through an immense multitude of astonished and loyal inhabitants, who rent the air with acclamations; proceeded strait to the cathedral of "Notre Dame," in order to return his acknowledgements to Heaven, for the signal protection extended towards him on so memorable an occasion. We cannot help being reminded, while we peruse these facts, that events, precisely similar, have recently been performed in the same city. At the end of two hundred and twenty years, the seventh descendant in the male line from Henry the Fourth, has entered Paris amidst even louder testimonies of national joy than his ancestor received; after having extinguished a monster more cruel, more perfidious, and more sanguinary than "the League." So perfect a coincidence of events may well justify the assertion, that history forms only a perpetual repetition of the same images, presented to our view in different ages of the earth.

Such were the wise regulations adopted by Henry, for the preservation of public tranquillity, and such the exactitude with which they were pursued, that no popular commotion, nor act of violence took place. Attentive not only to the positive obligations of honor and treaty, but

but to the finer attentions of courtesy and gallantry, he sent to assure the Papal legate, as well as the Duchesses of Nemours and Montpensier, that their persons and property remained under his immediate safeguard. The citizens, recovering from their apprehensions, and no longer actuated by the dread of being exposed to the fury of a licentious soldiery, resumed their ordinary employments: while Paris exhibited in the course of the same day, the singular contrast of a place entered by hostile forces, and of a peaceful, well ordered city. The dismission of the Spanish ministers and troops appeared still wanting, in order to complete the splendor, as well as to guarantee the solidity of the acquisition. Immediate intimation was therefore conveyed on the part of the King, to the Duke of Feria, assuring him that no obstacle should be opposed to his evacuation of the metropolis, with the forces under his command; adding that their march should be unmolested while traversing the French provinces, to the frontiers of Flanders. Intelligence so pleasing, was gladly received by Philip's general, who in consequence began his retreat on the afternoon of the same day; Henry being present in person when the Spaniards, to the number of three thousand, passed out of the gate of St. Denis. Saluting them with his accustomed courtesy, he charged the Duke of Feria to carry his recommendations to the Catholic King; but he accompanied the compliment with his injuncions to that commander,

Dismission of the Spanish troops.

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mander, to return no more to Paris. A circumstance more flattering to the French soveriegn, or more humiliating to the Spanish monarch, could not have been presented to the view of the two nations.[m]

Bastile surrendered.

Du Bourg, who commanded in the Bastile, exhibited an example of fidelity and adherence to the Duke of Mayenne, rare in that age, by refusing either to surrender, or to sell, the fortress entrusted to his care. He even made some preparations for resistance; but, conscious that he could neither long defend himself, nor expect to be succoured by his friends, he capitulated after a few days, on honorable terms. The castle of Vincennes, situate in the immediate vicinity of Paris, followed the example[n]: a castle rendered memorable during the late revolutionary history of France, by one of the most "foul and midnight murders" ever perpetrated in the person of a prince, since the similar acts of blood attributed to Richard the Third among us, more than three centuries ago. Henry, by so rapid and fortunate a series of events, thus become master of the capital, lost not an instant in endeavouring to restore tranquillity, to revive the obedience due to the laws, and to obliterate the memory of past transactions. Near five years had elapsed since the flight of his predecessor from Paris,

[m] Jour. d'Henry IV., vol. i. p. 223—227.; and tom. ii. p. 1—5. Sully, vol. i. p. 138—140. De Thou, vol. xii. p. 138—142. Davila, p. 1280—1284. Chron. Nov. vol. iii. p. 334—343. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 8—12. D'Aubigné, Hist. Univ. vol. iii. p. 334—337.

[n] Chron. Noven. vol. iii. p. 342, and p. 343, 344.

during

during which period of time that metropolis had remained a prey to all the calamities inseparable from a state of insurrection. Henry himself, a fugitive, proscribed by his own sovereign, pursued by the armies of the crown, and excommunicated by successive popes; had not beheld the French capital, except as an enemy laying siege to the place, during the long space of eighteen years. His descendant, Louis the Eighteenth, still more severely persecuted by the foreign tyrant, who occupied his throne; has witnessed the revolution of three-and-twenty summers passed in exile, amidst perpetual dangers, since his escape from Paris in 1791, down to the period of his restoration. The parliament, which had given many proofs of loyalty, even under the most adverse circumstances, and which had suffered severely from the tyranny of the "Council of sixteen;" was re-established by Henry in its authority, privileges, and jurisdiction. His generosity induced him to allow the edict to be carried into immediate execution, without waiting for the return of the fugitive members who having followed his fortune, held their deliberations at Tours, ever since the insurrection of the Parisians under the preceding reign. Grateful for so distinguished a mark of royal favour, the parliament repaid it by adopting the strongest resolutions, declaratory of their abhorrence and detestation of the proceedings of "the League." Having expressly revoked and annulled the powers delegated to the Duke of Mayenne, as "Lieutenant-general

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Restoration of the parliament.

30th Mar.

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general of the crown;" they enjoined him, on pain of treason, to acknowledge Henry the Fourth for his lawful sovereign; abolishing every act of the pretended assembly of the States General, as the criminal machinations of rebels devoted to the court of Madrid.[o]

Act of indemnity and oblivion.

These resolutions had been preceded by an edict of amnesty and indemnity to the Parisians, couched in the most comprehensive terms, including the pardon or remission of every fault committed by them since the commencement of the troubles. Henry's magnanimity disdained to punish even the ecclesiastics accused of exciting Barriere to assassinate him; whom he permitted to withdraw unmolested, under the protection of the Cardinal-legate[p]. Such nevertheless remained the impotent and inextinguishable enmity of many of the zealous preachers of "the League," that even the ruin of their party, and the terror of immediate punishment, could not impose a restraint on their conduct. Continuing to declaim against the King, to refuse absolution to such individuals as acknowledged his title, and to excite the people anew to sedition; it became necessary to embrace some measure for the suppression of an evil, which, in a metropolis recently subjected, among minds susceptible of the most violent impressions,

Measures for preserving tranquillity.

[o] De Thou, vol. xii. p. 145—148. Chron. Noven. vol. iii. p. 345—347.

[p] De Thou, vol. xii p. 141. Jour. d'Henry IV., vol. i. tom. ii. p. 14.

might be productive of fresh commotions. Orders were therefore issued, and billets delivered, to about fifty of the most intractable partizans of Spain and "the League," enjoining them to quit the city without delay. Yet in this single violation, if such it can with propriety be termed, of the articles stipulated on the part of Brissac before he delivered up the capital; the utmost attention to the safety and protection of every individual, was observed on the part of the government. Being furnished with passports, they were preserved from violence, and admitted either to take the oaths of allegiance and submission; or in case of refusal, allowed to retire to their own houses. Excited by the example of the parliament, the university of Paris having convoked its members, adopted resolutions calculated to allay the scruples of the timid and the bigotted; many of which description of men hesitated to acknowledge the legitimacy of the King's title, while he remained unabsolved from the Papal censures. [q]

CHAP. IV. 1594. 22d April.

The tide which had ran for several years with irresistible impetuosity, in favour of rebellion; now flowed with equal violence, in an opposite direction. Rouen, together with several other considerable places in Normandy, returned to the obedience of the crown. Villars, who had signalized himself by his long and successful defence of that city, having treated for its sub-

26th April. Treaty with Villars, for Rouen.

[q] Jour. d'Henry IV., vol. i. p. 226—230. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 15. De Thou, vol. xii. p. 144, 145, and p. 151, 152. Chron. Nov. vol. iii. p. 347—349. Davila, p. 1285.

mission;

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mission; obtained from Henry almost every concession or donation, which his avidity and ambition could dictate. In addition to a prodigious sum of ready money, pensions, and employments, was added the important and honorable charge of Admiral of France[r]. As it became necessary for the King, however reluctantly, to deprive Biron of that high office, on whom it had been previously conferred; Henry endeavoured to soften so unpalatable a measure, by raising him to the supreme rank of Marshal, as well as by the most liberal testimonies of affection and confidence. But, the wound inflicted, was incurable; and the resentment to which it unhappily gave birth in a high spirited, indignant mind, was eventually productive of the most fatal consequences. Biron conceiving his services repaid with neglect or ingratitude, listened to the suggestions made by the emissaries of Spain, excited convulsions in the state, and became finally the victim of his own treasonable practices. Even in those portions of France where the authority and influence of the princes of Lorrain had been most acknowledged, a spirit of reviving loyalty disclosed itself. Abbeville, a principal city of Picardy, in defiance of the Duke of Aumale, sent a deputation to the King, imploring pardon for their rebellion. In Champagne, though that province was under the Duke of Guise's im-

Submission of Abbeville,

[r] Sully, vol. i. p. 129—138, and p. 140—144. Davila, p. 1286. Chron. Nov. vol. iii. p. 356—358.

mediate

mediate government; Troyes, the capital, after having expelled the Prince of Joinville his brother, invited the royal troops to repair to their assistance. The Duke of Elbœuf, first of all the princes of the family of Lorrain, having made his private submissions to Henry, was rewarded with the government of Poitiers. Many inferior cities in every part of France, throwing off their subjection to "the League," eagerly sought to merit forgiveness, by a prompt return to their duty.[s]

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and of other cities.

The Duke of Mayenne, when from the pressure of circumstances he quitted Paris, having repaired to Bar le Duc, a city situate in the dominions of the Duke of Lorrain; a conference there took place between him and that Prince, respecting the measures proper to be embraced in the declining state of their common affairs. During a tumultuous and discordant consultation, at which the Duke of Aumale assisted, no resolution of energy was embraced for their common defence or safety. The natural irresolution characteristic of Mayenne, acquired strength by the disagreement of his allies: while on one hand, the Duke of Lorrain inclined to negotiate a peace with the King of France; on the other, the Duke of Aumale, implacable as well as desperate, proposed to admit the Spaniards into the city of Amiens, and to renounce his native or adopted country, by submitting unconditionally to Philip the

Measures of Mayenne.

[s] Davila, p. 1290, 1291. Chron. Nov. vol. iii. p. 358, 359. De Thou, vol. xii. p. 152—154.

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Second[t]. Placed in this embarrassing situation, having only the choice of evils, Mayenne, after a short conference with Count Mansfeldt, commander of the Spanish forces, determined to visit Brussels in person. The government of the Low Countries had been recently conferred by the Catholic King, on the Arch-duke Ernest, whose election he had vainly attempted to procure to the French throne. Desirous of justifying himself from the imputations laid to his charge by the embassadors of Spain, and of concerting at the same time in person the operations of the approaching campaign; the Duke of Mayenne ventured to entrust himself to the good faith of the new governor of the Netherlands. Ernest received him with every external demonstration of respect and confidence. But, the Duke of Feria and his colleagues, irritated at the impediments which, in his public capacity, of "Lieutenant-general of the crown," he had opposed to the choice of the Infanta as Queen; strenuously urged the expediency of seizing his person, and even of punishing him as a traitor. So perfidious a counsel was notwithstanding rejected by the Arch-duke, without hesitation. Conscious that such a breach of public faith, if committed against a Prince who had voluntarily confided himself to the national honor, must produce the most injurious consequences to the crown of Spain, incense the other branches of the

He repairs to Brussels.

[t] Davila, p. 1291, 1292.

family of Lorrain, alienate the adherents of Mayenne from Philip, and precipitate the destruction of "the League," Ernest embraced an opposite line of conduct. [u]

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The reduction, or rather submission of the metropolis to Henry the Fourth, which event had been followed by the return of Lyons, Orleans, Rouen, and so many other cities, to his obedience; rendered nevertheless expedient the adoption of a new system for the future prosecution of the war. No rational hopes of elevating Clara Isabella to the throne of France, were any longer nourished by the enemy; nor could it now be expected, that the sceptre would pass from the Capetian dynasty, into a branch of the house of Austria. But, the kingdom which Philip had vainly laboured to acquire, or at least to dismember and destroy, he might still be able to diminish and to weaken; since the party with which he acted, though enfeebled, was not by any means extinct. Henry continuing likewise unabsolved from the sentence of excommunication; the court of Rome, attentive to the events of the war, would unquestionably regulate its conduct towards him, by that Prince's ultimate good, or ill success. Burgundy remained firm in its adherence to the Duke of Mayenne, while Brittany was subjected in a great measure to the dominion of the Duke of Mercœur. Philip had even obtained possession of the two most valuable and

Position of Philip the Second.

[u] De Thou, vol. xii. p. 280, 281. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 28. Davila, p. 1301, 1302. Memoires de Nevers, vol. xii. p. 710—715.

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commercial ports in the latter province. Blavet, constructed on the southern coast, better known in the present century by the name of Port l'Orient, was garrisoned by Don John d'Aquila, who had under his command, four thousand veteran Spaniards. Crodon, situate in the immediate vicinity of Brest, the harbour of which place it completely blocked; was a fort already far advanced in its construction, situated upon a craggy and almost insulated rock, overhanging the sea. The advantages which Spain must derive from her possession of two such fortresses, and the interest which England, as well as France, must feel in Philip's ejection from Brittany, could not admit of a doubt. Elizabeth, who only six years earlier, had seen "the invincible Armada" invade her shores, still dreaded the power of her inveterate foe. Henry had reason to contemplate him with even greater apprehension. If to his present acquisitions, the Catholic King could join the two contiguous provinces of Picardy and Champagne, he might still be regarded as the arbiter of the French monarchy, since he could at pleasure invade and overrun the kingdom on its most vulnerable quarter. [x]

Plan for continuing the war, embraced by Spain.

In consequence of these facts, orders were sent from the cabinet of Madrid, to the Archduke, enjoining him to march a body of forces into Picardy, with which he might endeavour

[x] De Thou, vol. xii. p. 310, 311. Mezeray, vol. xii. p. 22, 23. Davila, p. 1293—1296, and p. 1322, 1323.

to

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to gain possession of the most important places on that exposed frontier. Mansfeldt, at the head of ten thousand infantry, and a thousand cavalry, accompanied by the Duke of Aumale, having instantly entered France, sat down before the small fortress of La Capelle. Henry no sooner received intelligence of the irruption of the Spaniards into his dominions, than quitting Paris, he hastened to its relief; but before he could arrive in its vicinity, the town had already surrendered. Anxious to repair the loss, and unable to force Mansfeldt to hazard a general engagement, he formed the siege of Laön; a city which from its position on the summit of a mountain, was then considered as one of the strongest places in the kingdom, and which has acquired great celebrity during the recent campaign of 1814. The Duke of Mayenne, who had left in it his second son, the Count de Sommerive, had removed thither, as to a place of security, his most valuable effects. Nor could it be denied that the enterprize partook in some measure of temerity, when it was considered that Henry might be assailed in his camp, by the united forces of Spain and of "the League." It required all the vigilance of the King, aided by the military talents of Biron, and the courage of the French nobility, who crouded to the royal standard, in order to overcome the resistance made by the besieged. The allied army, led by Mansfeldt and Mayenne, having advanced to succour Laön, exerted the most desperate efforts to throw provisions into the city. But,

9th May.

25th May. Henry besieges Laön.

CHAP. IV.

1594. Efforts of the Spaniards, to relieve the city.

the loss of one of their principal convoys, where a considerable body of Spaniards was put to the sword, necessitated the confederates to retire. In effecting their retreat before a victorious enemy, which was not unaccompanied with danger; the eminent military abilities of the Duke of Mayenne, over which

16th June.

the defeats sustained at Ivry and at Arques, had thrown a shade, were conspicuously and beneficially displayed. Covering the rear from insult, he exposed his person like a private soldier, while he performed the office of an experienced commander, and extorted applauses

It surrenders.

from Henry himself. Laön, abandoned to its fate, continued nevertheless to make a long and

22d July.

desperate resistance; nor did it surrender, till no hopes remained of relief arriving from any quarter. The King granted to the garrison, the most honorable conditions.[y]

Terrified by the success of the royal arms, and anxious to avert a similar fate from themselves, the inhabitants of the principal cities of

August.

Picardy, sent to offer their submissions. Even the presence, sustained by the remonstrances of the Dukes of Mayenne and of Aumale, could not prevent the revolt of Amiens from their

September.

party. Noyon was taken by the King, after a short siege. Beauvais voluntarily returned to its allegiance; and after a victorious campaign, Henry repairing to Paris, was received with testimonies of joy and affection. His pre-

[y] Sully, vol. i. p. 148, and p. 155—160. D'Aubigné, Hist. Univ. vol. iii. p. 342—345. Davila, p. 1303—1311. De Thou, vol. xii. p. 281—289. Chron. Nov. vol. iii. p. 360—364.

sence

sence had become requisite in the capital, where the remaining adherents of Spain and of Mayenne, secretly aided by the discontented among his own courtiers, and openly encouraged by Biron, who had never forgiven the injury done him by Henry's resumption of the dignity of admiral; seemed to menace a dangerous fermentation[z]. The death of the Cardinal of Bourbon, which took place in the full vigor of his age and faculties; whose name still served to perpetuate a faction in the state, and whose ambition, if aided by circumstances, might have led him to enterprizes of a criminal nature; proved highly favorable to the continuance of tranquillity. A prince of so dangerous a character, could have been little regretted by the King; and his numerous ecclesiastical preferments, which remained at the disposal of the crown, enabled Henry to reward the services of his adherents, or to purchase the submission of those with whom he was engaged in negotiations.[a]

CHAP. IV. 1594.

Death of the Cardinal of Bourbon.

During the progress of these events, the Duke of Mayenne repairing again to Brussels, endeavoured to support his declining fortune, by making new conventions with the ministers of Philip. Deserted by his own party, accused by the embassadors of Spain with betraying the common cause, and feebly supported by the Arch-duke; he was reduced to the humiliating

Second visit of Mayenne, to Brussels.

[z] Mezeray, vol. x. p. 19, 20.

[a] De Thou, vol. xii. p. 277, 278. Jour. d'Henry IV., vol. i. tom. ii. p. 37, 38. Sully, vol. i. p. 150—152, and p. 171, 172. Chron. Nov. vol. iii. p. 407.

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necessity of justifying his conduct to the court of Madrid. Tho' encouraged to open a treaty with Henry, whose magnanimity and clemency he well knew; his characteristic indecision, added to some faint and fallacious hopes of retrieving his affairs, prevented him from as yet embracing so salutary a measure. It was at length determined in the Arch-duke's council, to make the dutchy of Burgundy the theatre of war; a province where Mayenne's personal influence was great, and all the principal cities of which, might be considered as at his devotion. As the vicinity of the *County* of Burgundy, or Franche Comté, which then constituted a part of the Spanish dominions, might likewise greatly facilitate the entry of a foreign army on that side of France; it was supposed, not without reason, that Henry, if vigorously attacked at the same time, in two quarters so widely separated, would be unable to make an effectual resistance. But, such had become the general consternation or defection among the component members of "the League," that the union could no longer be perpetuated, except by the operation of violence and terror.

Defection of Burgundy, from "the League."

Macon, Auxerre, and other cities of Burgundy, expelled their garrisons: Dijon, capital of the province, prepared to follow the example; only the personal appearance of the Duke of Mayenne, at the head of a body of cavalry, having prevented the submission of the inhabitants to the crown. He was even compelled to recur to acts of severity and

and punishment, in order to deter them from new attempts of a similar nature. Some of the magistrates having been put to death by his express command, the most jealous precautions were used to retain the inferior citizens in subjection. A cause which stood in need of such support, was evidently hastening to its dissolution. [b]

1594. N

Hostilities in Brittany.

While on the northern and eastern frontier, so many great transactions took place, the more remote provinces were not exempt from the calamities of civil war. In Brittany, where Marshal d'Aumont was opposed to the Duke of Mercœur, and to Don John d'Aquila; if the troops of "the League" had acted in concert with those of Spain, their superiority to the royal forces must have beome indisputable. But their mutual distrust, which approached to enmity, enabled d'Aumont, after taking the townof Morlaix, to push further his advantages. Being reinforced by a body of English, whom Elizabeth, the steady ally of Henry, and the unalterable enemy of Philip, had sent over to Brittany, under the command of Sir John Norris; he determined to form the siege of Crodon. This fortress, intended by the court of Madrid to bridle the refractory spirit of the Bretons, and which from its position commanded the entrance of the harbour of Brest; though not completed, was nevertheless capable of making a long defence. Praxede, a Spanish officer of

D'Aumont lays siege to Crodon.

[b] Chron. Nov. vol. iii. p. 415—429. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 27, 28. De Thou, vol. xii. p. 353—356. Davila, p. 1318—1320.

approved

CHAP. IV. 1594.

approved capacity, sustained by three hundred of his countrymen, who were furnished with every requisite for sustaining an attack, having been placed in the fort, proved himself deserving the confidence reposed in his valor and skill. The autumnal season proved unfavorable to the besiegers, who laboured under numerous impediments; and only the junction of the Duke of Mercœur with Aquila was wanting, in order to have compelled the Royalists to raise the siege. Even when hopeless of relief, and sustained by his own courage alone, Praxede exerted the most heroic efforts for preserving so valuable an acquisition to the crown of Spain. His troops, animated with the same spirit, having refused to capitulate or even to demand quarter, perished almost to the last man, when the victorious soldiers of D'Aumont entered the place. Nor was the capture effected without a prodigious effusion of blood, on the part of the conquerors. Frobisher, so celebrated in the naval annals of England, was killed in the breach; and Elizabeth, menaced with new invasions in her own dominions by Philip, shortly afterwards recalled her forces from France. The fort of Crodon was instantly demolished by the Bretons: but that important and commercial province did not effect its entire emancipation from the Spanish power, for several years subsequent to these events; and Spain retained the port of Blavet, till the final accommodation concluded

17th Nov. It is taken by storm.

cluded between the two crowns, at the treaty of Vervins. [c]

CHAP. IV.

1594.

At the south east extremity of the kingdom, on the shore of the Mediterranean, Marseilles continued to maintain itself in a state of avowed revolt; and that commercial city, always democratic in its character, like the Greeks from whom they sprung, seemed to meditate the design of erecting itself into a species of republic governed by Duumvirs, under the protection of Spain. On the other hand, the Duke of Epernon, whose insolence and despotism had rendered him odious to the inhabitants of Provence, scarcely deigned to observe the forms of submission or respect towards the crown. The ambiguity of his political conduct, and the tyranny of his administration, equally impelled Henry to desire his removal from the government of so important a province. But its distance from the capital, together with the unconfirmed state of the royal authority over the great nobility, during a period of civil commotion,—these considerations imposed restraints on the King, who did not venture to adopt a measure, at once difficult and uncertain in the execution. Marshal Montmorency, who had been recently raised to the dignity of Constable of France; which high office had remained vacant during seven-and-twenty years, ever since the death of his father Anne de Montmorency,

Affairs of Provence.

[c] Davila, p. 1322—1327. Hume, Hist. of England, vol. v. p. 374. De Thou, vol. xii. p. 305—317. Chron. Nov. vol. iii. p. 414. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 22, 23.

killed

CHAP. IV.

killed at the battle of St. Denis; was therefore commissioned, after hearing the complaints of

1594. the parliament and people of Aix, finally to arbitrate between them and Epernon. Various causes of delay nevertheless interposing to prevent the accomplishment of the object intended, secret orders were issued to Lesdiguieres, who commanded the royal forces in Dauphiné, authorizing him to expel Epernon by violence.

Lesidguieres opposes Epernon.

Lesdiguieres therefore passing the river Durance, at the head of a body of troops, entered Provence; and after an indecisive action, reduced his adversary to renounce possession of the fort which he had recently constructed, for the purpose of holding in subjection the city of Aix. The fort itself was soon afterwards demolished by the inhabitants themselves, indignant at the treatment which they had received from their governor, and indirectly encouraged by the General of the crown[d]. Having restored a degree of temporary calm to Provence, he returned back into Dauphiné; where Charles Emanuel, Duke of Savoy, always active and vigilant, had availed himself of Lesdiguieres' absence.

War with Savoy.

Reinforced by a number of German and Milaneze troops, the Duke laid siege to Briqueras; a frontier place, the vicinity of which to Turin, rendered it peculiarly capable of annoying his subjects, and even of endangering his capital.

23d Oct.

The fort surrendered after a vigorous resistance; and the approach of winter incapacitated

[d] Vie d'Epernon, vol. ii. p. 61—99. De Thou, vol. xii. p. 317—323. Vie de Lesdiguieres, p. 145—152. Davila, p. 1327—1330.

Lesdi-

Lesdiguieres from making any effectual exertions, for retrieving so important a loss. [e]

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1594.

Wearied with a war which equally exhausted his dominions and drained his resources, the Duke of Lorrain having negotiated a separate peace with the King of France, entered into an offensive treaty of alliance with him; or at least permitted his troops to fight under the French banners, against Spain [f]. The Duke of Guise himself, renouncing the expectation of a chimerical crown which he could never hope to realize, and ill supported by the Spaniards, sought an occasion of submitting to his legitimate sovereign. He was stimulated to the measure, by the exhortations of his nearest relations, the Duchesses of Nemours and Montpensier; by the personal alienation which subsisted between him and his uncle, the Duke of Mayenne; and by the embarrassed state of his affairs. The cities of Champagne which still adhered to him, were held by a very precarious tenure; and he had only obtained recent possession of Rheims itself, in consequence of the commission of a crime. St. Pol, a soldier of fortune, who during the troubles of "the League," being originally aided by the protection of the late Duke of Guise assassinated at Blois, had risen to a high degree of civil and military consideration; profiting of the impri-

Peace with the Duke of Lorrain. 16th Nov.

[e] Guichenon, Hist. de Savoye, vol. i. p. 747—749. Vie de Lesdig. p. 152—154. Davila, p. 1330, 1331. De Thou, vol. xii. p. 324—327. Chron. Nov. vol. iii. p. 441, 442.

[f] Chron. Nov. vol. iii. p. 407—410. De Thou, vol. xii. p. 344, 345. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 25, 26, and p. 30, 31.

son-

CHAP. IV. 1594.

sonment of the young Duke, rendered himself almost absolute and independant throughout the province of Champagne. Rheims being occupied by a numerous garrison, partly composed of Spaniards, which was entirely at his devotion; it became necessary either to put him to death, or to renounce all expectation of recovering the place. Under these circumstances, the Duke did not hesitate to commit so foul an act with his own hand, and to become the executioner of St. Pol, whom he ran through the body with a sword. Even after the perpetration of such a crime, he did not the less obtain from the necessities of Henry, the most favorable terms; including an oblivion of every offence; a vast sum for the liquidation of his own, and his father's debts, originally contracted in the cause of rebellion; and ultimately, the government of Provence, in exchange or in compensation for that of Champagne. He could scarcely have dictated better conditions, if he had proved victorious; and Henry was too well justified in the complaint which sometimes involuntarily escaped him, that "he had been compelled to purchase "from rebels, the possession of his own do-"minions"[g]. Louis the Eighteenth might not without reason utter a similar exclamation at the present day.

Submission of the Duke of Guise. 29th Nov.

December.

The King, after having renewed the edict of Poitiers in favor of his Protestant subjects, re-

[g] Jour. d'Hen. IV., vol. i. tom. ii. p. 5. Davila, p. 1321, 1322. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 26, 27. Chron. Nov. vol. iii. p. 411—413. De Thou, vol. xii. p. 300—302. Sully, vol. i. p. 176—180, and p. 185.

paired

paired again without delay to the frontiers, where the advanced season of the year, and the rigors of winter, could not suspend the operations of war. Conscious that he must henceforth meet the whole shock of the Spanish monarchy, and that Philip, who had hitherto acted only as an auxiliary of "the League," the pretended champion of the Catholic religion, would assail him with all his forces; Henry prepared to support the impending contest. Yet anxious if possible to avert so dangerous a conflict, he addressed letters to the states and cities both of Haynault and of Artois, exhorting them to induce the King of Spain to withdraw his forces from the French territories; menacing them at the same time, with rendering their country the theatre of hostilities, if the court of Madrid should persist in its measures [h]. No reply whatever was made to these denunciations, either on the part of the Arch-duke, or from the states; and Henry returning to Paris, narrowly escaped a danger more formidable than any external attack of Spain, or of his rebellious subjects in the field. A youth, named John Chatel, who had not completed his nineteenth year, of a melancholy disposition, and addicted to many of the most depraved, or abandoned propensities of human nature; determined, from a desire of expiating his offences, to merit the favor of Heaven, by stabbing the King. For this purpose having mixed in the croud who assembled to congra-

1594.

17th Dec. Henry addresses letters to the Flemings.

[h] De Thou, vol. xii. p. 327—330. Chron. Nov. vol. iii. p. 430—432.

tulate

CHAP. IV.

tulate Henry on his safe return to the capital; he aimed a blow, which was so well directed, that if the King in stooping forward to embrace Montigny, one of his courtiers, had not fortunately given the knife another direction, it must probably have inflicted a mortal wound. Instead of entering his throat, as was intended, the instrument only struck his mouth, and broke one of his teeth. The assassin being instantly seized, was conducted to prison. Sustained by fanaticism, he supported all the variety of torture used at his execution, with unconquerable firmness; upheld by the same mistaken principle which had originally impelled him to so criminal an act, and which sanguinary spirit characterized the age.[i]

1594. Chatel stabs the King.

29th Dec.

The society of Jesuits, some individuals of whom appeared to have been privy to the design, if not to have actually encouraged him to its commission, became involved in the penalties of Chatel's sentence. Their devoted adherence to Spain, and to "the League," when added to the genius and spirit of their principles or doctrines, which seemed to inculcate regicide in many cases, rendered them justly obnoxious to general indignation. The parliament of Paris having by a severe decree, pronounced them seducers of youth; banished them the kingdom within fifteen days, on pain

Exile of the Jesuits.

[i] D'Aub. Hist. Univ. vol. iii. p. 339, 340. Davila, p. 1332, 1333. Chron. Nov. vol. iii. p. 432—435. De Thou, vol. xii. p. 330—335. Jour. d'Hen. IV., vol. i. tom. ii. p. 64—68. Sully, vol. i. p. 191.

of

of treason, confiscating at the same time their property to pious uses. Guignard, a member of their body, convicted of having in his possession, if not of composing libellous papers, tending to subvert all government, and to excite to the assassination of princes, was executed. A pyramid, commemorative of the crime perpetrated by Chatel, containing on its different sides, a number of inscriptions defamatory of the Jesuits; was even erected in the middle of the metropolis, on the spot where had stood the assassin's house. Yet, such was the ascendancy and influence possessed by that celebrated order of ecclesiastics; so insinuating was their address, and so powerful were their protectors; that the parliaments of Toulouse and of Bourdeaux refused to concur in the sentence issued at Paris. Under their protection, the Jesuits still continued to exercise their functions; till the active interference of the see of Rome in their behalf, aided by other favorable circumstances, having procured at the end of ten years, the obliteration of all past transactions or offences, the re-establishment of the order took place throughout every part of France. [k]

CHAP. IV. 1594.

On his recovery from the effects of the wound which he had received from Chatel, Henry, without further delay declared war on Spain, with every accompanying ceremony usual in that century. He followed it by the publica-

1595. 17th Jan. Henry proclaims war with Spain.

[k] D'Aub. Hist. Gen. vol. iii. p. 340—342. De Thou, vol. xii. p. 335—338. Davila, p. 1334. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 32—34. Chron. Nov. vol. iii. p. 435—440.

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tion of a Manifesto, calculated to render Philip odious to all Europe, as the common enemy of the tranquillity of nations, and peculiarly of the repose of France. The court of Madrid, in a counter declaration justified its proceedings; the Catholic King continuing to veil his enmity or ambition, under the specious pretence of zeal for the purity of the Catholic faith, and the extirpation of heresy[1]. It may perhaps admit of some doubt, whether in thus commencing an open contest with so powerful a monarchy as Spain, Henry did not exhibit more resentment, or display more magnanimity, than he manifested sound policy. He appeared rather to imitate the chivalrous and heroic spirit of Francis the First, than to take for his model, the deep, cautious and able line of conduct, embraced by Charles the Fifth, surnamed the Wise; whose masterly and judicious measures, under similar circumstances, ultimately triumphed over the arms of Edward the Third, King of England. The situation of the French monarchy, which was not less disastrous under Henry of Bourbon, than it had been under Charles of Valois, demanded equal ability to effect its extrication. France, exhausted by a long series of civil war, seemed unequal to sustaining the pressure of the Spanish arms; and at various times antecedent to the peace of Vervins, nearly sunk under their weight. The finances being in the last stage of disorder,

Reflexions on that measure.

[1] De Thou, vol. xii. p. 342—344. Chron. Nov. vol. ii. p. 481—483.

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anticipation, and confusion, the King found it equally difficult to content his Catholic, and to repress his Hugonot subjects. In various provinces, "the League" still continued powerful: while the nobility who adhered to the crown, impoverished in their fortunes, and diminished in their numbers, loudly demanded a respite from the toils of repeated campaigns. Henry himself, scarcely become master of his capital, in danger of perpetual assassination, unabsolved by the Papal see, destitute of issue, and hourly exposed to the accidents of war; held his crown and life by the most precarious tenure. His death, if it had taken place, must have been followed by a disputed succession, aggravated by every misfortune incident to external hostility, and to internal weakness or division. In perusing history, we are perpetually compelled to admit, that the chain of events, whose minute links often elude research, and which the vulgar blindly denominate fortune, but which the wise and good resolve into a superintending providence; is, far more even than policy or ability, the arbitress of the destiny of nations. When we contemplate the recent transactions which have produced the fall of Bonaparte, his exile, and the auspicious restoration of the Bourbons; events that might have been regarded as too romantic for belief, only two years ago; we shall probably find additional reasons for acquiescing in the truth, as well as justice, of these reflexions.

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1595. Affairs of Burgundy.

The rapid progress of the royal affairs in Burgundy, seemed nevertheless to form the best justification of the rupture with Spain, and to menace the complete extinction of the remaining power or influence of Mayenne. Neither his exhortations, nor his menaces, could controul the spirit of disaffection spread among the inhabitants of the principal cities thro'out that extensive province. In defiance of a numerous garrison, the citizens of Beaune having risen tumultuously, admitted Marshal Biron into the town; and after a desperate conflict, compelled the governor placed over them by the head of "the League," to retire into the citadel. Invested by superior forces, and hopeless of relief, he was ultimately necessitated to surrender, after a protracted defence of near five weeks[m]. Nor did the affairs of the Duke of Nemours, in the adjoining province of the Lyonnois, wear a more favorable appearance. That prince having by a bold and ingenious stratagem, effected his escape from the castle of Pierre Encise, where he had been detained; resumed his plans for rendering himself master of Lyons, either by famine, or by force. Assisted by his ally and relation the Duke of Savoy, he collected forces, reinforced the garrisons which belonged to him on the Rhone, and flattered himself with the speedy completion of his ambitious projects. But the venality, or the perfidy of one of his military officers who

5th Feb.

Escape, and projects of the Duke of Nemours.

March.

[m] Chron. Nov. vol. iii. p. 487—491. Davila, p. 1341—1342. De Thou, vol. xii. p. 353—358.

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commanded in the neighbouring city of Vienne; and who, corrupted by the offers of the Constable Montmorency, betrayed to him the place; at once rendered abortive all the hopes nourished by the Duke of Nemours. Overcome with the loss of his principal fortress and post upon the Rhone, he renounced the prosecution of hostilities. Retiring soon afterwards to Annecy in Savoy, the emotions of indignation, grief, and disappointment, operating on a high-spirited mind incapable of supporting adverse fortune with constancy, produced a distemper, of which, after languishing a considerable time, he finally expired some months later, at the age of twenty-eight years. Dreaded by his enemies, admired by his friends, and possessing qualities rather brilliant and dangerous, than solid or conciliating, he appeared to be little regretted by any party: his death was quickly obliterated amidst the important transactions of so momentous a period. [n]

CHAP. IV.

1595. 24th April.

His death.

Excited by the example and success of the inhabitants of Beaune, the magistrates and people of Dijon having recourse to arms, attacked the troops of Mayenne, and compelled the Viscount de Tavannes, his lieutenant, to take refuge in the citadel. Biron being invited by them to repair to their assistance, lost no time in entering the city, where he made every preparation for besieging the enemy. Mean-

Biron is received into Dijon.

[n] Chron. Nov. vol. iii. p. 492—495, and p. 518—522. D'Aub. Hist. Univ. vol. iii. p. 348—350. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 35—37. De Thou, vol. xii. p. 323, 324, and p. 455—458, and p. 462, 463.

CHAP. IV.

1595. April.

while Ferdinand de Velasco, Constable of Castile, governor of the Milanese, having received from the court of Madrid, peremptory orders to invade France, assembled a considerable army. Descending the Alps through the territories of Savoy, he entered the County of Burgundy, from which portion of his Sovereign's dominions he soon expelled the troops of Lorrain in Henry's service; who profiting of the defenceless state of that remote and detached province of the Spanish monarchy, had already captured several places. Velasco was speedily joined by the Duke of Mayenne, at the head of a select body of brave and veteran adherents, who still accompanied his declining fortune. The confederates, unopposed, approached the banks of the Saone, over which river they made dispositions for throwing bridges, in order to advance to the relief of the citadel of Dijon. Alarmed at the prospect of being attacked and surrounded by so superior a force, Biron, unable either to reduce Tavannes to capitulate, or with his slender numbers to meet the enemy in the field; urged the King by repeated messengers, to march without delay to his relief. Biron's entreaties were sustained by the expostulations of the Constable of Montmorency, who commanded at Lyons; and who equally dreaded that the whole weight of the Spanish arms might soon be directed against himself. A more powerful and eloquent advocate than either Biron or Montmorency, interposing her influence, induced Henry to yield to their request.

Velasco, and Mayenne, march to relieve the citadel. May.

quest. The celebrated Gabrielle d'Etrees, his mistress, flattered with the expectation that he might effect the speedy conquest of the County of Burgundy, and that he would confer that acquisition on the son whom she had just borne him; joined likewise to their entreaties, her solicitations. These united efforts, irresistible in their operation, determined the King at once to repair in person to Dijon, regardless of every impediment. *

CHAP. IV. 1595.

Henry determines to repair to Burgundy. Motives, and effects of that measure.

If it seems hard to condemn, it may perhaps be found still more difficult to justify on sound principles, Henry's conduct in yielding so precipitate a compliance with their wishes. However critical or important might appear the affairs of Burgundy; yet the state of the northern provinces, still more exposed to the Spanish inroads, presented alarming considerations. Picardy and Champagne, open to invasion, offered an easy entrance to the forces of Philip, conducted by the Duke of Aumale, Rosne, and many other illustrious, or intrepid partizans of "the League," whom despair animated with double ardour, against their native prince and country. Death had already terminated the short administration of the Archduke Ernest, in the Netherlands; and he had been succeeded provisionally by the Count de Fuentes, who in addition to an implacable enmity towards France, joined military talents, activity, and enterprize. In such a situation, for

* Sully, vol. i. p. 192, 193. Davila, p. 1346. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 37, 38. Cheron. Nov. vol. iii. p. 495, 496.

CHAP. IV. 1595.

Henry to abandon the capital, and to expose his person on a remote enterprize, in the acquisition of glory, or of territory, appeared to be replete with danger. Even the progress of Velasco, and of Mayenne in Burgundy, however rapid it might prove, could not be productive of evils so great, as the success of Fuentes would operate in Picardy; the vicinity of which province to the metropolis, rendered its defence and preservation peculiarly necessary to the state. These obvious considerations, which merited mature attention, were nevertheless unable to retard, or to affect the King's resolution. Previous to his departure, having placed the Prince of Conti, his cousin, at the head of a council of state in Paris; he entrusted the protection of the northern frontiers to Marshal Bouillon, the Count de St. Pol, and Villars; the latter of whom conducted a body of Norman troops from Rouen, to the assistance of his two colleagues. They were all enjoined to act in concert, obeying the orders of the Duke of Nevers, as commander in chief. Experience however quickly demonstrated, that neither the civil, nor the military system embraced by Henry, were maturely considered, or judiciously chosen under the existing circumstances of France. The council stationed in the capital, feeble, divided, and destitute of energy, proved inadequate to the task. In the camp, the incompatible and fiery temper of Villars, was ill calculated for either acting in combination, or for submitting to a superior authority. Bouillon, though

Precautions, for the security of Picardy.

though possessed of capacity and experience, laboured under the disadvantage of being a Hugonot; and the Count de St. Pol, young, as well as of limited talents, possessed little weight or influence in the deliberations. All the misfortunes which distinguished the campaign, may be justly attributed to so vicious and defective a plan, aggravated by the absence of the sovereign on a distant frontier. [p]

Immediately subsequent to his arrival at Dijon, Henry leaving a body of troops under the Count de Torigny, with orders to continue the blockade of the citadel; advanced at the head of about fifteen hundred cavalry, in order to retard the march of the Spanish army. Velasco had already passed the River Saone; and the advanced parties of his horse, meeting with those of the royal forces, a skirmish ensued between them. Biron, by the King's command, having endeavoured to reconnoitre their strength and position, was attacked by a superior number of the enemy; and found himself reduced, after a vigorous resistance, to retreat in confusion, pursued by the French auxiliaries in the service of Spain, whom Mayenne had conducted to the aid of Velasco. In this dangerous and critical predicament, Henry, though himself almost unarmed, accompanied only by about two hundred and sixty horse, principally composed of the nobility who attended him, yet disdained to fly before the assailants.

30th June. Combat of Fontaine Françoise.

[p] Sully, vol. i. p. 193, 194. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 38, 39.

Not-

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Notwithstanding the inequality of the contest, and in presence of the whole cavalry of the confederates, who were sustained at no considerable distance by their infantry; he ventured to face them in the hope of rescuing Biron. His little troop, conscious of the magnitude of the peril, and sensible that the preservation of the King's person lay only in their individual courage; made the most desperate exertions, repulsed the enemy, and even pursued them a short distance. It is nevertheless incontestable that Henry, who displayed more temerity than conduct, on the occasion, owed his escape from so imminent a danger, solely to the incapacity and the tardy movements of Velasco. His predecessor Francis the First, with equal intrepidity, and far more numerous forces, but with inferior good fortune, had been made prisoner at Pavia, and transferred to Madrid. John, King of France, taken at Poitiers, had been in like manner carried to London. Henry narrowly escaped a similar fate, or a premature death; and severe as were the terms imposed by the Emperor Charles the Fifth on Francis, while he lay in captivity, Henry might have expected a more cruel, or ignominious treatment from Philip, who detested his person, and denied his title.

Reflexions on the King's conduct.

The Duke of Mayenne, sensible that the King had imprudently engaged himself too far, that his infantry could not arrive in time to render him any assistance, and that he might be easily routed or taken; urged the Constable of Castile to improve the moment, by marching to a cer-

tain victory. We are lost in attempting to speculate on the consequences which might have resulted to the French monarchy, had Mayenne's remonstrances prevailed. But the Spaniard, cautious, distrustful of his ally, and fearful to commit to hazard the dominions of his sovereign, peremptorily refused to follow the advice. On the contrary, intimidated by his knowledge that Henry had been personally present in the combat, and aware of the activity as well as enterprize of so experienced a commander, he relinquished all further views of conquest. Limiting his ambition to the preservation of the County of Burgundy, he intantly began his retreat across the Saone, broke down the bridges, and taking a strong position under the walls of the town of Gray, prepared for defensive operations. Henry, after pursuing him a few miles, and attempting to harass, or to cut off his rear, desisted, and returned to Dijon, in order to accelerate the reduction of the castle. [q]

Velasco retreats.

No

[q] De Thou, vol. xii. p. 360—365. Davila, p. 1346, 1351. Chron. Nov. vol. iii. p. 495—500. Sully, vol. i. p. 298—300. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 41, 42. D'Aub. Hist. Univ. vol. iii. p. 352—355.

All the contemporary historians have minutely related the particulars of this celebrated combat; but it is in Davila, who was himself a soldier, that we find the most accurate, animated, and picturesque narration of the skirmish. Neither Biron, nor the King, had intended to do more, than merely to reconnoitre the position and strength of the Spanish army. They were in fact surprized and attacked by a body of cavalry, chiefly composed of the troops of Mayenne. Only the most desperate efforts of courage, aided by good fortune, extricated Henry from the danger. Biron being without his helmet, was wounded on the head; nor was the King better prepared for action in that respect. Davila scarcely blames Velasco for not exerting more

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1595. Desperate situation of Mayenne.

No situation could now be regarded as more hopeless or desperate than the position of Mayenne. Indignant at the conduct of Velasco, and frustrated in his expectation of retrieving by one fortunate effort, his ruined affairs; exhausted in his means of continuing the war, and not daring to expose himself to the hazard of being invested by the royal forces in Chalons, the only city of importance thro'out Burgundy which still adhered to him; he presented a striking example of the vicissitude of fortune. The inhumanity of his Spanish ally towards the sick and wounded soldiers of "the League," who were refused entrance into the town of Gray, augmented the bitterness of his reflections: while the generous behaviour of Henry, who caused the French prisoners that fell into his hands, to be treated with tenderness and care, was calculated to make on him a deep, as well as an opposite impression. Surrounded with difficulties, the Duke, as his last resource, determined to retire into the territories of Savoy; to demand a safe-conduct from Philip, for his

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more decision or dispatch, as the Spanish commander well knew that the loss of the whole County of Burgundy, must have been the inevitable consequence of a defeat. Like the Duke of Parma, at the skirmish of Aumale, he gave the King of France credit for less temerity, or more prudence; and like that illustrious commander, Velasco, if reproached with his error, might have replied, that he "believed "himself contending with a General, and not with a Carabineer." Though Velasco's refusal to allow the Duke of Mayenne to charge at the head of the allied cavalry, proved the means of the King's preservation; yet it seems difficult to impute to him any very great degree of blame for that act of caution.

passage

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passage through Spain; and repairing in person to Madrid, there at the feet of the Catholic King, to justify his own measures, by pointing out the errors which had involved their party in ruin[r]. From the adoption of so decisive and irretrievable a step, he was saved by the interposition of Henry, who caused him to be indirectly apprized, that advantageous and honorable terms would yet be granted him; adding, that in the meantime he might find an asylum in Chalons, where he should neither be molested, nor besieged. Even in this last extremity of his affairs, the Duke did not accept the King's proposal, till he had made a final effort for inducing the Constable of Castile to succour the castle of Dijon. Having received a refusal, he quitted the Spanish camp, accompanied by the small remainder of his followers; retired to Chalons, and commanded the citadel of Dijon, as well as the fortress of Taland in its vicinity, to be surrendered to the royal forces.[s]

He retires to Chalons.

In contemplating this act of Henry, which by its inevitable consequences virtually extinguished "the League," as a political party acting under the Duke of Mayenne; we are not more charmed with the magnanimity and clemency, than we are penetrated with the sound policy and enlarged wisdom of the measure. Past experience had proved, in the person of the great Constable, Charles of Bourbon, under

Wisdom, and magnanimity of Henry's conduct.

[r] De Thou, vol. xii. p. 365. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 42.
[s] Davila, p. 1351—1352. De Thou, vol. xii. p. 365, 366.

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1595. the reign of Francis the First; how deep were the wounds, which one illustrious and persecuted individual could inflict on his native country, when driven by royal animosity to seek refuge in the arms of a foreign prince. Henry, during the course of the present year, found ample occasion to lament, that similar lenity had not been extended to the remaining chiefs of the same powerful faction. Spain principally owed the success which she obtained on the northern frontier, to their intimate knowledge of the weakness of France, and their local acquaintance with the vulnerable parts of the monarchy. The Duke of Mayenne, though placed by a combination of circumstances, at the head of a powerful body in opposition to the crown, had never betrayed any personal animosity towards Henry. With still less reason could he be accused of having sacrificed the kingdom to Philip; the elevation of whose daughter the Infanta to the throne, he had first opposed, and finally prevented, by the delays which he interposed to its accomplishment. His friends and adherents were not only numerous, but some fortunate accident, yet possible in the reverses of war, might renew and awaken the dying spirit of the faction. It behoved a wise and able prince, to extinguish even the very name of that formidable league which had so nearly subverted the French monarchy; and while struggling with external enemies, to seize with eagerness every means for suppressing the further continuance of civil war.

Seduced

CHAP. IV.

1595.

Seduced or dazzled by the prosperous condition of his affairs, the King, after restoring order in the Duchy of Burgundy, marched into the County of that name, passed the Saone into the territories of Philip, and endeavoured to provoke Velasco to an action. But the Spaniard, strongly entrenched, and protected by the cannon of Gray, declined a battle, and allowed the French to ravage the province, up to the gates of Bezanson the capital; secure that though Henry might desolate the open country, he could not make any permanent conquests, or retain any acquisitions. After a continuation of hostilities for some weeks, he began in fact to perceive that the reduction of that portion of the Spanish dominions, was not to be effected without greater preparations, more numerous armies, and longer time. Maladies which spread among his troops, enfeebled his operations: while on the other hand, the Swiss confederacy, alarmed at the near approaches of so formidable a neighbour, and roused by the cries of the inhabitants, who reclaimed their protection; interposed the powerful mediation of the Helvetic body, to induce the King to leave the County of Burgundy in repose. These motives operated with sufficient force, to procure the evacuation of the province; which continued to form part of the monarchy of Spain, till it was conquered in the ensuing century, more than seventy years later, by Louis the Fourteenth,

July. Henry enters the County of Burgundy.

August.

He retires.

CHAP. IV.

teenth, under the feeble successors of Philip the Second. [t]

1595. 4th Sept. Henry repairing with his court to Lyons, made a species of triumphal entry into the city; received the testimonies of loyalty offered him by the inhabitants, and passed a short time amidst the festivities, acclamations, and marks of public joy, which his presence occasioned in the place.

7th Sept. Truce made with Mayenne. Soon after his arrival, he granted a truce to the Duke of Mercœur, for the period of four months, which cessation of hostilities comprehended the two adjoining provinces of Poitou and of Brittany.

23d Sept. With the Duke of Mayenne he established a similar suspension of arms, extending throughout the remainder of the kingdom, during the space of three months, preparatory to a general pacification. The Duke of Joyeuse, together with the Duke of Nemours, whose death had not then taken place, were both included in this convention, as being principal members of "the League." An armistice was likewise agreed on between the King and Charles Emanuel, Duke of Savoy; but new difficulties which arose, delayed, and finally prevented the conclusion of a permanent peace between the two princes.

Prosperous state of the King's affairs. On every side Henry beheld only submission or victory. "The League" might be regarded as apparently vanquished, when its chief had already taken shelter under his clemency. He received from his agents at the court of Rome, the most flat-

[t] De Thou, vol. xii. p. 369—371. Chron. Nov. vol. iii. p. 500, 501. Davila, p. 1352—1355.

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tering assurances of speedy absolution from Clement the Eighth. After subjecting the province of Burgundy, he had carried devastation beyond the limits of France, into the territories of Philip. Intoxicated in some measure by so many flattering circumstances, desirous of tasting repose after his recent exertions and dangers, retained by the charms of his mistress Gabrielle d'Etrees, the Cleopatra of France; to whom as to the Egyptian Queen in antiquity, universal homage was paid, as supreme arbitress of favors and honors; the King appears to have been enervated in a degree, and to have forgotten for a short time, his more essential duties. His stay at Lyons proved injurious to his own glory, and highly detrimental to the kingdom. He was speedily roused from his inactivity when too late, by intelligence of the most adverse events, which had already taken place at another extremity of his dominions. [u]

[u] De Thou, vol. xii. p. 424—428. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 45—47. Chron. Nov. vol. iii. p. 513—518, and p. 523—526.

CHAP. V.

Military operations in Picardy. — Defeat of the French by Fuentes. — Capture of Dourlens. — Enterprize of Cambray. — State of that place. — Siege of it by Fuentes. — Its surrender. — Absolution of Henry by Clement the Eighth. — Affairs of Provence. — Treaty with Mayenne. — Recovery of Marseilles. — Capture of Calais, by the Arch-duke Albert. — Termination of the campaign. — League between France and England. — Convocation of an assembly, at Rouen. — Surprize of Amiens by the Spaniards. — Consequences of that event. — Critical condition of France. — Siege of Amiens. — Attempt of Albert to bring relief. — Surrender of Amiens. — Conferences for peace. — Causes which produced it. — Submission of Mercœur. — Edict of Nantes. — Obstacles to the treaty of Vervins. — Its conclusion. — Reflexions.

CHAP V.

1595. Fuentes enters Picardy. 10th June.

WHILE Henry, in the too ardent pursuit of military glory, or in the enjoyment of pleasure and repose, seemed inattentive to the more important interests of his people; the Count de Fuentes, at the head of an army formidable rather from its veteran skill, than imposing from its numbers, entering Picardy, sat down before Le Catelet, a little place situate on the frontiers. During the prosecution of the siege, Humieres, Lieutenant-governor of the province on the part of the crown, commenced a secret negotiation with D'Orvilliers, whom the Duke

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Duke of Aumale had placed in the castle of Ham, and who was irritated against the Spaniards for a breach of faith. The object of the treaty was soon accomplished by the admission of the royal troops into the fortress; but, as the enemy already occupied the town of Ham, a long and desperate action ensued between the forces of the two nations. It terminated, after a great effusion of blood, in favour of the French; who, incensed at the obstinate resistance made, and deeply sensible to the loss of Humieres, killed in the attack, refused quarter to the surviving Spaniards. Near six hundred were put to the sword, in defiance of Marshal Bouillon's utmost exertions for their preservation; and the town itself was pillaged by the soldiery[a]. The Count de Fuentes, who had not been able to arrive in time to the assistance of his countrymen, endeavoured to obtain some compensation for the loss of Ham, by continuing or resuming the siege of Le Catelet, which place soon afterwards surrendered on terms of capitulation.

1595. 20th June. Capture of Ham.

25th June.

Encouraged by the facility attending the capture, he ventured to invest Dourlens, a town of considerable size, not far removed from Amiens, capital of the province of Picardy. Bouillon having first thrown into it a supply of troops, consisting principally of gentry or nobility who served in the royal army; approached it in person, with an intention of either relieving Dourlens, or of giving battle to the besiegers. Fu-

15th July. Siege of Dourlens.

[a] Davila, p. 1366—1372. Chron. Nov. vol. iii. p. 501, 502. De Thou, vol. xii. p. 382—391. Hist. de Bouillon, vol. ii. p. 81—92. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 47—49. Sully, vol. i. p. 296.

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entes, apprized of the design, having left a body of troops to guard the trenches, marched to meet the French. The disunion subsisting between Villars and Bouillon, encreased by their mutual jealousy; and the injudicious precipitation with which, instead of waiting for the arrival and junction of the Duke of Nevers, who was only a few leagues distant, they hazarded a general action; — these united causes gave the Spaniards a decisive victory. Villars, borne away by the impetuosity of his courage, regardless of the prudent remonstrances of Bouillon; being surrounded, and made prisoner, was put to death on the spot. The circumstances attending it, were exceedingly similar to those which marked the fate of the Duke of Joyeuse at Coutras; and bore a no less striking resemblance to the tragical end of Louis, Prince of Condé, massacred on the field of Jarnac, during the civil wars under Charles the Ninth[b]. In all the leading facts that distinguished the engagement at Dourlens, we trace an equally remarkable coincidence with the battle of St. Quentin, where the first Constable Montmorency, in 1557, fell into the hands of the Spaniards.

24th July. Defeat of the French army.

The conquerors, elated by success, having immediately resumed the siege of Dourlens, pressed it forward with ardor. Though abandoned to its own resources, and no longer supported by any expectation of relief; the garri-

[b] Davila, p. 1373—1379. Chron. Nov. vol. iii. p. 502—505. Hist. de Bouillon, vol. ii. p. 92—97. De Thou, vol. xii. p. 400—406. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 50—52. Sully, vol. i. p. 297. D'Aub. Hist. Univ. vol. iii. p. 356—358.

son, which was numerous and brave, might have repulsed the assailants, or at least might have obtained an honorable capitulation in the last extremity. But, the same want of subordination which prevailed in the French camp, pervaded the town; and the governor, unskilled in the art of defending cities, neglected the measures most necessary for its preservation. Availing himself of these circumstances, which were aided by the emulation existing among the Spaniards, Neapolitans, and Walloons who composed his army; Fuentes gave orders for an assault to be made on one of the bastions of the castle. It was carried, together with the fortress itself; and the troops pushing on, entered the town together with the fugitives. Liberated from restraint, the victorious soldiery, incensed at the recent slaughter of their countrymen at Ham, and eager for an occasion to retaliate, not only put to the sword all the persons bearing arms; but massacred indiscriminately the inhabitants of both sexes, and of all conditions. It was not till night and fatigue interposed to moderate their fury, that they began to grant quarter to such individuals as had taken refuge in the churches. Above two thousand men, women, and children, perished in the carnage, which equalled in savage ferocity, the excesses committed by the barbarians who overturned the Roman empire. The terror diffused by such a sanguinary act, over the whole frontier, was so great, that Amiens, and all the towns lying along the banks of the River Somme, scarcely considered themselves

31st July. Storm, and massacre of Dourlens.

CHAP. V. 1595.

secure under the protection of the Duke of Nevers. That general having, not without reluctance, assumed the command of the broken and dispirited army recently defeated; was necessitated to divide his force into separate bodies, which he stationed throughout the borders, in the uncertainty where the Spanish commander might direct his next attack. [c]

Fuentes meditates the siege of Cambray.

But, all the enterprizes of Fuentes were only meant as preparations for a more important undertaking, the siege of Cambray; before which place, after various marches, designed to keep the French in ignorance of his intention, he sud-

13th Aug.

denly sat down at the head of his troops. That city, whose magnitude, population, and manufactures, rendered it one of the most considerable in the Low Countries; had been delivered up by the Flemings, together with its surrounding territory, to Francis, Duke of Alenson, when he was called in to their assistance. He bequeathed it by his last will, to Catherine of Medicis his mother, as constituting the only fruit of his unsuccessful and inglorious expeditions

State of Cambray, at this period.

to the Netherlands. The Queen placed in it, John de Balagny, natural son to the celebrated Montluc, Bishop of Valence, whose political negotiations or intrigues eminently contributed to the elevation of Henry the Third to the Polish throne; and nephew to Marshal Montluc, known in the annals of France by his military exploits, no less than by his historical Commentaries. If Balagny, who after the death of Catherine, con-

[c] De Thou, vol. xii. p. 407, 408. Davila, p. 1380—1382. Chron. Nov. vol. iii. p. 506, 507.

tinued

1595.

tinued to retain possession of the city, would have consulted the felicity or advantage of its inhabitants; the acquisition might probably have been rendered as permanent, as it unquestionably was valuable in itself. But, not satisfied with expelling the Archbishop, under whose mild and limited jurisdiction the citizens had always been protected and cherished; he seized on the temporalities of the see, which he appropriated to his own use. The people, after being deprived of their civil immunities, were subsequently loaded with pecuniary exactions. His wife, who was sister to Bussy d'Amboise, the insolent favorite of the Duke of Alenson; manifested an undaunted intrepidity, and a masculine spirit: but as a counterpoise to those virtues, she exceeded her husband in rapacity, avarice, and violence. Neither were the neighbouring provinces exempt from Balagny's incursions and depredations. These circumstances, all which were well known to the Spanish general, induced him to hazard so bold a measure as the siege of Cambray: nor was he, probably, insensible to the glory of reducing a place, regarded even by the great Duke of Parma himself, as beyond his power, and above his strength. Fuentes became further encouraged to persist in his attempt, by the exhortations of the inhabitants of the provinces of Artois and Haynault, who engaged to furnish ample supplies of money, as well as of provisions, during the progress of the siege. [d]

Tyranny of Balagny.

[d] De Thou, vol. xii. p. 412—414. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 58.

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1595. Henry takes Balagny under his protection.

In the course of those troubles by which France was agitated thro'out the last years of the reign of Henry the Third, Balagny, ungrateful to the court, had joined the party of "the League." But, anticipating its destruction, he made his timely submission to Henry the Fourth, on condition of retaining for himself Cambray and its territory as a fief, which should be held of the French crown by military tenure: the terms being accepted by the King, Balagny from that time assumed the title of "Prince of Cambray, and of the Cambresis." The frail and transitory foundation on which reposed the new principality, was nevertheless foreseen by many of the wisest men about the person of Henry. He himself, during a visit which, at Balagny's express solicitation he made to Cambray in the course of the preceding year, had urged him to accept an equivalent in a more secure part of the dominions of France; allowing a city so exposed to attack, to be at once incorporated with the monarchy. But, the vanity, presumption, and folly of its possessor, would not permit him to profit of so salutary an offer[c]; tho' he had been palpably deficient in every necessary precaution for perpetuating, and preserving his usurpation. The regular forces in the place, only amounted to about seven hundred in number; but the Duke of Nevers, solicited by repeated messengers to afford Balagny im-

[c] De Thou, vol. xii. p. 291—295. Chron. Nov. vol. iii. p. 429, 430.

mediate

mediate aid, instantly dispatched his own son thither, at the head of near eight hundred cavalry. In defiance of all the impediments opposed to the attempt, he found means to enter the city; which received a further augmentation of strength by the arrival and exertions of De Vic, then esteemed the most skilful commander of France, if not of all Europe, in the science of fortification, and in the conduct of sieges. The assailants were repulsed in various efforts to storm the outworks: the autumnal season so unfavorable to military operations, rapidly approached: while the Duke of Nevers was assembling forces for the relief of the besieged; and the King himself might soon be expected to arrive in person, at the head of fresh troops. [f]

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1595. 15th Aug. Difficulty of the siege. 11th Sept.

Under these discouraging circumstances, Fuentes would have unquestionably abandoned the enterprize, if the French rebels serving in his army, had not besought him to persist, in the hope and expectation of speedily seeing a commotion break out within the place; expectations which became fully verified by the result. The citizens were indeed by no means averse to the French government; but, detesting the tyranny of Balagny, they sought to be liberated, at any price, or by any sacrifice, from his oppression. After the commencement of the siege, having deputed some members of their

Discontent of the inhabitants.

[f] Davila, p. 1382—1388. Chron. Nov. vol. iii. p. 512, 513. De Thou, vol. xii. p. 416—421.

body

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body to wait on Henry, at Lyons; they besought him to give them a solemn promise of being reinstated in the enjoyment of their antient liberties, under the protection of the crown of France. In return for this boon, they pledged to him the fidelity and loyalty of their fellow citizens. But the King, induced by the solicitations of his interested mistress Gabrielle, whom Balagny had found means to gain over to his side; and already fettered by the conditions of the treaty concluded with him, rejected or eluded their requests[g]. His most impolitic refusal produced the surrender of the city. Driven to despair by Henry's treatment, the inhabitants availing themselves of the moment when the garrison, in expectation of an immediate assault on the part of the besiegers, was occupied in the breach; rose tumultuously, and seized on one of the gates. Neither the exhortations of De Vic, nor the pathetic supplications of Balagny's wife, who offered to conduct them in person against the enemy, and to perish at their head, could divert or even delay their purpose. After a short parley held with Fuentes, and receiving a general promise of oblivion and protection on his part, the Spaniards were admitted into the city.

Insurrection.

Spaniards, admitted into the place. 2d Oct.

The French retiring to the citadel, might still however have maintained their ground till assistance could have arrived; if the blind and improvident avarice of Balagny's wife had

[g] De Thou, vol. xii. p. 425—427.

not

not already completed her own, as well as her husband's downfall, by selling the grain and provisions indispensable for the nourishment of the troops. She expiated her infatuation by a death, which the agitations of her own mind accelerated and produced, a few hours previous to the loss of her transitory greatness. Balagny, like Napoleon Bonaparte, less sensible to shame, or more attached to life, supported his fall with an indifference bordering on insensibility; sinking without emotion from the rank of a prince, to the private condition of a subject. The garrison, necessitated to surrender, having obtained from the general of Philip, honorable conditions, evacuated the citadel. Fuentes returning victorious to Brussels, after a campaign of unexampled success, was received into that capital with acclamations, as the restorer of the Spanish glory, which since the Duke of Parma's decease, had suffered a temporary eclipse. Cambray, thus lost by the incapacity, tyranny, and improvidence of Balagny, when added to the delays and supine security of Henry; remained united to the crown of Spain, continuing to form a part of the monarchy, till it was reduced to the obedience of Louis the Fourteenth, before the close of the seventeenth century. [h]

1595.

Citadel surrenders. 9th Oct.

The King, roused at length from his inglorious inactivity, by repeated information of the augmenting danger of Cambray; quitting

Henry arrives in Picardy.

[h] De Thou, vol. xii. p. 428—436. Memoires de Nevers, vol. ii. p. 717—732. Hist. de Bouillon, vol. ii. p. 98, 99. Davila, p. 1389—1392. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 59—62. Chron. Nov. vol. iii. p. 526—529. D'Aub. Hist. Gen. vol. iii. p. 360, 361.

Lyons,

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Lyons, hastened to the frontier. But he arrived too late to remedy the evil, which his absence at so critical a juncture, had in some measure occasioned. He found the army discontented and dejected; the capital full of faction and of complaint; while the northern provinces, from Calais across all Picardy, quite to the gates of Sedan, were terrified, defenceless, and open to invasion. It formed some subject of consolation, under these distressful circumstances, to know that his absolution, so long denied or protracted, had been obtained from the sovereign pontiff. Clement, after having fulfilled all the obligations which he thought due to the sanctity of his own character and office; to the security of the Romish religion; to the friendship of the Catholic King, the avowed protector of the Holy See; and to the temporal interests of the successors of St. Peter; thought it prudent to relax in his severity. The example of England, which was lost to the apostolic church, scarcely sixty years earlier, by the injudicious or timid deference of one of his predecessors for a Prince of the house of Austria; held out to him an instructive admonition. He dreaded the total separation of France from the communion of the church of Rome, the diminution of his spiritual power, and the defalcation of his revenues.

Motives of Clement, for absolving the King.

On the other hand he beheld Henry acknowledged as sovereign by almost all France, triumphant over "the League," admired and venerated from one extremity to the other of Europe. Of the stability, if not the sincerity of his

his conversion, Clement could have no room to doubt: while the King, with filial humility and contrition still continued to entreat the papal benediction, as alone necessary to consummate his union with the Catholic church. Having therefore determined to grant the absolution, it only remained for him to make the conditions annexed to the act, as advantageous as possible, to the pontificate. In this part of the negotiation, all the refinement of Italian policy was exhibited and exerted by the court of Rome. Philip the Second, attentive to embarrass and to delay, if he could not altogether prevent the accomplishment of the work; endeavoured to procure the insertion of demands, dishonoring to the crown of France, or personally degrading to Henry. But the patience, dexterity, and pliability of D'Ossat and Du Perron, the King's two Procurators; qualities which were sustained by equal firmness and inflexibility upon certain points, finally surmounted every impediment.[1]

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Delays to its accomplishment.

The ceremony of the Papal absolution was preceded by public acts of penitence and prayer; accompanied with all the observances of devotion and splendor, calculated to increase the veneration felt for the pontifical authority; and followed by festivities, or marks of general satisfaction. The scene selected for its performance, was the spot which extends in front of the church of St. Peter; than which,

Ceremony of the Papal absolution.

17th Sept.

[1] Chron. Nov. vol. iii. p. 533—535. De Thou, vol. xii. p. 468—477.

none

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none more appropriate could have been chosen for such an exhibition. Clement, elevated on a superb throne, having on his head the Tiara, and other ornaments of his sacerdotal dignity, surrounded by the members of the sacred College, and in presence of a vast multitude; beheld extended at his feet, the suppliant representatives of the King of France. In imitation of the antient Roman mode of restoring slaves to liberty, the pontiff enfranchised Henry, by the application of a wand or rod; with which, from time to time, he gently touched the shoulders of his two Procurators. He then pronounced, as the immediate delegate and vicar of Christ on earth, the sentence of absolution; after which, the doors of the Basilique of St. Peter being thrown open, Mass was celebrated with unusual pomp. We cannot help contrasting the spectacle exhibited by Clement the Eighth on this occasion, elevated above all human dignities, looking down on sovereigns, and dispensing pardon to the first crowned head in Europe; with the degraded situation of his predecessor Clement the Seventh, about seventy years before; shut up in the castle of St. Angelo, beholding Rome abandoned to pillage, and flying in disguise before the troops of the Emperor Charles the Fifth, as his only refuge from the last extremities.

Reflexions on it.

It must be admitted, that in so ostentatious a display of the apostolic power arrogated by the popes, the majesty of Henry and of the crown of France, were not altogether respected by

by the Vatican. But policy compelled him to submit to almost any humiliation, in order to obtain the Papal forgiveness; without which sanction, neither his throne, nor even his life, were secure from rebellion and assassination. It removed the only remaining support of "the League," weakened the efforts of Spain, calmed the scruples of superstition, and disarmed the violence of sedition. The King, who received the intelligence with joy, ordered public thanksgiving to be offered for it to Heaven, throughout the whole extent of his dominions. Sensible of the advantages derived from the friendship of the Holy See, he cultivated it with ardor; and omitted no occasion during his future reign, of demonstrating the fervency of his attachment to the religion which he had embraced from political necessity.[k]

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Its beneficial effects.

25th Nov.

Anxious at the same time to repair the breaches made by Fuentes on the northern frontier; which calamities he was conscious, might have been prevented, at least in part, by his greater diligence and expedition; he determined, notwithstanding the approach of winter, to undertake some enterprize calculated for restoring his reputation, while it allayed the general discontent. Having received a reinforcement of troops from England, Scotland, and Holland, he sat down suddenly before La Fere; the only town possessed by the Spaniards,

8th Nov. Henry besieges La Fere.

[k] Bruys, Hist. des Papes, vol. v. p. 117—119. Chron. Nov. vol. iii. p. 536—538. Davila, p. 1356—1362. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 53—58 De Thou, vol. xii. p. 477, 478. Memoires de Chiverny, vol. i. p. 360—376.

situate

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1595. situate to the south of the river Somme. The position of the place, environed by morasses; the numbers and intrepidity of the garrison, together with the advanced season of the year;—these causes rendering the progress of the siege nevertheless slow, obliged the King to convert it into a species of blockade[l]. In various parts of the kingdom, the flames of civil war, though diminishing in violence, were 19th Aug. not yet wholly extinct. Marshal d'Aumont was killed, while engaged before an inconsiderable fort in Brittany: but the indecision, or the incapacity of the Duke of Mercœur, combining with his alienation from the Spanish commander, prevented their jointly profiting of an event, which might have proved in its results so injurious to the royal affairs[m]. Hostilities had continued among the defiles and precipices of the Alps, between Lesdiguieres and the Duke of Savoy, with alternate success, till they were suspended by the truce concluded at Lyons. Toulouse, together with a part of Languedoc, still continued to obey the Duke of Joyeuse.

State of Provence. Provence, more than any other portion of France, presented a scene of anarchy, confusion, and outrage. Epernon, who pretended to have received from Henry the Third, the contingent reversion of the government, after the death of his brother La Valette; and whose arrogance rendered him incapable of listening to moderate measures or counsels;

[l] De Thou, vol. xii. p. 439, and p. 601. Davila, p. 1402, 1403.
[m] Ibid. p. 443—450. Davila, p. 1393, 1394. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 67.

per-

persisted to maintain himself in the command of the province, by force of arms. Neither the open detestation of the people of every rank, towards his person, nor the concealed opposition which he experienced on the part of the crown, could shake his determination. Henry, unable to turn his forces towards that quarter of the kingdom, and apprehensive of irritating so powerful a subject by any act of severity; embraced the hazardous expedient of conferring the government of Provence on the Duke of Guise: a resolution to which he adhered, notwithstanding the remonstrances of his principal ministers. They exposed in forcible terms, the imprudence of entrusting so important a maritime province to the care of a young prince, scarcely emancipated from his engagements with "the League;" who had been nearly raised by Spain to the French throne; and who, in virtue of his descent from the antient Counts of Provence, might revive his pretensions to its sovereignty. Experience, nevertheless, justified the choice made by the King, of the Duke of Guise, for a post of such dangerous eminence.[n]

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1595.

Duke of Guise is sent governor.

1596. Treaty with Mayenne.

The publication of the treaty which had long been negotiating between Henry and the Duke of Mayenne, took place soon after the commencement of the ensuing year. Though the terms were far less advantageous to the latter,

[n] Memoires de Chiverny, vol. i. p. 335—337. Chron. Nov. vol. iii. p. 581, 582. De Thou, vol. xii. p. 463—465. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 46. Davila, p. 1407. Hist. d'Epernon, vol. ii. p. 102—107.

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1596. January.

than those which he might have exacted when master of the capital, supported by a numerous army; yet the conditions, which might be esteemed highly honorable, were such as have rarely been granted by a sovereign, to a rebellious and vanquished subject. The great principles of resistance, on which, as head of "the League," Mayenne had taken up arms against the crown, were admitted to have been not only justifiable, but in some measure meritorious. He was acquitted, in common with all the princes and princesses of the family of Lorrain, from any participation in, or knowledge of, the assassination of Henry the Third. His pecuniary incumbrances within the kingdom, as well as those contracted for the hire of foreign troops, were declared to be debts of the state; and it was stipulated that their liquidation should be made out of the royal coffers. Besides complete indemnity and oblivion for every past transaction, the cities of Soissons and of Chalons upon the Saone, were left to Mayenne during the space of six years, as places of security. His eldest son, created a peer of France, by the title of Duke of Aiguillon, was provided with the reversion of the government of Burgundy.

Articles of it.

Opposition of the parliament of Paris.

The parliament of Paris did not however manifest the same facility in registering, which the King had displayed in conceding, so liberal and comprehensive an edict. It was thought indecorous, if not degrading to the majesty of the throne, to recognize the innocence of the Duke, and of his sister the Duchess of Montpensier,

pensier, together with their ignorance of the atrocious crime committed by Clement. A degree of indirect impunity seemed to be given by the edict, even to regicide itself; the consequences of which might prove, if possible, more pernicious than the atrocious act which it consigned to oblivion. Henry could neither be insensible to, nor unaffected by these considerations; but, weighty as they were, superior reasons compelled him to interpose his authority, and to consummate a negotiation, which alone could extinguish the party of "the League." Even after repeated injunctions, the parliament seems nevertheless, rather to have yielded to force, than to have conceded to inclination or conviction, in verifying the treaty. It was carried into effect with the most scrupulous fidelity. The magnanimous placability of the King, in his private reception of Mayenne, confirmed his triumph, by transforming the leader of a rebellious faction, into a loyal and affectionate servant. It is rare that history, which transmits so many monuments of the weakness or the vices of princes, is enabled to commemorate such an instance of benignity, wisdom, and clemency. In these endowments, neither the first nor the second of the Roman Cæsars, surpassed the founder of the house of Bourbon[o]. Louis the Eighteenth, instructed by adversity, is treading in the same traces, extending pardon to rebellion, and covering with

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Magnanimity of the King.

[o] Mezeray, vol. x. p. 63—66. Chiverny, vol. i. p. 356—360. De Thou, vol. xii. p. 602—608. Chron. Nov. vol. iii. p. 598—604. Davila, p. 1396—1401. Journal d'Henry IV., vol. i. p. 116, 117. Sully, vol. i. p. 327, 328.

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a veil the crimes of revolutionary France. The great features of the two periods of time, bear the strongest resemblance.

While Henry was thus employed in pardoning or conciliating his enemies; the courage, aided by the good fortune of his adherents in another quarter of the kingdom, atchieved an enterprize of the highest importance to the public safety and repose. Marseilles, which city had originally embraced the Catholic League, and which, at a subsequent period was nearly reduced to the obedience of Charles Emanuel, Duke of Savoy; had ultimately been subjugated by two of its own ambitious citizens. These Demagogues, by name, Casaux and Aix, under the denominations of Consul and of Supreme Judge, had not only arrogated, but had maintained themselves in possession of an unlimited authority. Supported by an armed force, and protected by the strength of the place, they bade defiance to external attack. Henry had vainly attempted to induce them to return to their allegiance, by every offer which could tempt their vanity, or gratify their avarice. They preferred entering into a treaty with Philip the Second, who having granted them all the conditions demanded, already anticipated the acquisition of Marseilles. Doria, who commanded the Genoese gallies in the Spanish service, was actually admitted into the harbour; and a short delay would have secured so invaluable a port, to the inveterate enemy of France.

State of the city of Marseilles.

Tyranny of the Duumvirs.

Enterprize of Libertat.

In this critical interval, the intrepidity of a native of Corsica, named Libertat, to whom the Duumvirs

Duumvirs had entrusted the principal gate of the city; overturned their usurpation, and frustrated the views of the court of Madrid, when so near to completion. Having negotiated with the new governor of Provence, the Duke of Guise, and being encouraged by an assurance of ample reward, he undertook and effected the emancipation of Marseilles. On the day fixed for executing his design, the royal troops, under cover of the night approached the walls; and Libertat, after having shut the gate upon Aix, who had gone out to reconnoitre, instantly put to death his colleague Casaux. Aix, though pursued by the forces of Guise, was so fortunate as to regain the city; and in conjunction with the son of the Duumvir recently killed, he attempted to make himself master of the gate where Libertat commanded the guard. But, the struggle proved of short duration. Weary of the tyranny exercised over them, the inhabitants rose, and declared for the crown. The soldiery, led by the Duke of Guise in person, were admitted into the place: while Doria, surprized and terrified, without making any resistance, crouded sail in order to escape with the gallies under his command. The two surviving chiefs of the rebels, after maintaining themselves during some days in possession of the forts which overlook the city, capitulated, on receiving a promise of their lives and their freedom. So complete a revolution was effected with astonishing rapidity, and almost without any effusion of blood. If we consider the political consequences which must have attended

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17th Feb.

Its success.

Importance of the acquisition.

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attended the subjection of Marseilles to Philip, we shall admit, that it was hardly possible to pay too highly the service rendered to the state by Libertat. From so impregnable a post, the Catholic King might have desolated Provence, awed the states of Italy, and carried on the whole commerce of the Levant. Its central position in the midst of the Mediterranean, which would in some measure have connected the dominions of Philip on the Tuscan coast, in Naples, Sicily, and Sardinia, with the continent of Spain, must have rendered him the undisputed arbiter of all the south of Europe. [p]

Epernon quits Provence.

The voluntary departure of the Duke of Epernon from Provence, which event speedily followed the reduction of Marseilles, restored a degree of tranquillity to that part of the kingdom. Pursued wherever he moved, by the enmity of the natives, who employed the most insidious or atrocious contrivances, in order to take away his life; opposed in the field by the Duke of Guise, at the head of a body of forces; and enjoined by Henry to quit the province, on pain of his severe displeasure; Epernon at length indignantly complied with so many warnings. But even when retiring, he made conditions with his sovereign; extorted new governments from the crown, in place of the post which he evacuated; and maintained himself in his castles on the banks of the Garonne,

[p] Davila, p. 1404—1410. De Thou, vol. xii. p. 613—624. Chron. Nov. vol. iii. p. 584—590. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 68—73.

in

in a sort of sullen independance upon the court and administration. [q]

CHAP. V.

1596. Arrival of Albert in the Netherlands. 11th Feb.

During these interesting transactions which took place on the coast of the Mediterranean, while the King was occupied before La Fere, the blockade of which town threatened to be protracted to a considerable length; the Cardinal Arch-duke Albert of Austria, a younger brother of Ernest so lately deceased, arrived at Brussels. He had already occupied in Portugal, the high office of viceroy; and Philip, who destined for him the hand of his daughter, the Infanta Clara Isabella, conferred on him as a preparatory step to that alliance, the government of the Netherlands. Ambitious to prove himself deserving of so distinguished a situation, and emulous to equal or to surpass the exploits of Fuentes his predecessor, Albert lost no time in preparing for the campaign. Sensible that it might prove dangerous, if not impracticable, to attempt the relief of La Fere, in presence of a numerous army, superior in cavalry, and animated by the presence of the King, he directed his views to another quarter. It would be found equally beneficial to make a powerful diversion, and to invest a frontier city of Picardy, while the royal forces were incapacitated for advancing speedily to its assistance. After mature deliberation, the advice of Rosne, one of the exiles serving in the Spanish army, who intimately knew the vulnerable part of the French monarchy at which to point his attack;

[q] Hist. d'Epernon, vol. ii. p. 107—127, and p. 137—141. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 73—75.

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1596. He determines to besiege Calais.

decided the Arch-duke in forming the siege of Calais. The distance of that city from La Fere, and the degree of security into which the supposed strength of the fortifications had lulled the garrison, presented additional motives to justify the selection.

The promptitude, celerity, and vigor which the Spanish commanders displayed, were followed by corresponding and rapid success. So incredible had been the supine negligence of the French, that the two forts of Nieulay, and of the Risbanc, which guarded the entrance

9th April. of the harbour, were carried almost without resistance. Every effort made by Henry for the preservation of the place, who on the first intimation of the danger that menaced Calais, had repaired to Boulogne, at the head of a body of cavalry; was rendered ineffectual by contrary winds, which prevented succours from

The town capitulates. entering the port. The town, battered by the cannon of the enemy, soon capitulated; though Bidossan, the governor, an officer of valor and fidelity, but deficient in military skill, continued to defend the citadel. The intrepidity of the assailants, guided by the superior talents of Rosne, overcame however all opposition.

23d April. Citadel stormed. Having ascended the breach, they stormed the fort, putting the troops found in it, to the sword[r]. Scarcely forty years had yet elapsed, since Henry the Second united it to the French monarchy. Calais, which after a possession of

[r] Davila, p. 1413—1422. De Thou, vol. xii. p. 630—637. Sully, vol. i. p. 301, 302. Chron. Nov. vol. iii. p. 610—612. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 75—80.

above

above two centuries, had been lost to England by the incapacity of Mary, daughter to Henry the Eighth, and the culpable neglect of her ministers, not less than by the fortunate exertions of Francis, Duke of Guise; became transferred in turn to Spain, by similar errors or inattention on the part of the government. The distracted condition of France, convulsed at once by civil and by foreign war, forms nevertheless too satisfactory an apology for Henry, who ever since his accession, had been reduced to contend unremittingly with rebels for the crown itself; and who being engaged before La Fere, could not personally extend his vigilance or his protection, over every part of so extensive a frontier. 1596.

3d May. Siege, and capture of Ardres.

Animated to new efforts by his past success, and still conducted in every measure by the same skilful counsels which had hitherto guided him, Albert marching out of Calais, formed the siege of Ardres. Neither the advantageous position of the place, together with a reinforcement of considerable magnitude which had been recently thrown into it; nor the expectation of receiving speedy assistance from the King himself, on which reliance might be placed; could prolong its defence beyond a very short term. The pusillanimity of Belin, the governor, in defiance of the opposition made by his own officers, and the valor of the troops, surrendered the place to Spain, nearly at the precise time when La Fere capitulated to Henry. The Arch-duke, satisfied with his acqui-

21st May. Surrender of La Fere.

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acquisitions, and not disposed to commit his conquests to the chance of war, did not wait for the approach of the royal forces. Retiring by hasty marches into Flanders, in order to refresh his troops, after having provided for the safety of Calais and of Ardres, he evacuated the French territory [s]. It might naturally have been supposed that a prince so enterprizing as Henry, would have profited of the enemy's absence, either to retake the two important places recently captured ,or at least to form some offensive plan of operation against the Spaniards.

Exhausted state of France.

But, such was the exhausted condition of the revenue, and so empty were the public coffers, as to incapacitate him for commencing any undertaking of expence or magnitude. The diseases which manifested themselves in the camp before La Fere, had diminished his numbers; while the devastation of Picardy caused by the Arch-duke's forces, rendered it impossible to procure subsistence for his own troops. In this distressful situation, he was reduced, as he had been after the siege of Paris, to separate his army; and stationing the soldiery in garrisons along the banks of the river Somme, he suspended all further military operations. [t]

The arrival of the Papal legate, Alexander, Cardinal of Medicis, whose mission was intended for affixing the seal to Henry's reconciliation with the Holy See, recalled him to the capital. That prelate, received with distin-

July.

[s] De Thou, vol. xii. p. 638—646. Davila, p. 1424—1429. Chron. Nov. vol. iii. p. 612, 613.

[t] Davila, p. 1429, 1430.

guished

guished honors, was met at his entrance into Paris, by Henry, the young Prince of Condé, presumptive heir to the crown, then scarcely eight years of age; whom the King having recently caused to be taken from under the care of the Hugonots, had educated in the Catholic faith. By thus depriving his Protestant subjects of so powerful a support, as they must have derived from retaining in their hands the first prince of the royal blood, attached to their party and religion; he consulted equally his own tranquillity, as well as the repose of France: while on the other hand he gave to the court of Rome an unequivocal proof of the sincerity of his late conversion. Soon afterwards, Charlotte de Tremouille, Dowager Princess of Condé, who, strongly accused of having poisoned her husband, had been long detained in confinement at St. John d'Angely; was set at liberty by Henry's express command. The parliament of Paris taking cognizance of the affair, after examination, thought proper to declare her innocent of that atrocious crime. We may nevertheless assume that policy, more than conviction arising from moral or juridical proof, dictated the sentence; when we reflect that in the event of the King's decease, the accused Princess would have stood in the near relation of mother to his minor successor.[u]

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Prince of Condé is brought to court.

Alarmed at the rapid advances of the Spaniards, who in the course of two campaigns,

Embassy sent to England.

[u] Chron. Nov. vol. iii. p. 618, 619. De Thou, vol. xii. p. 366—368.; and vol. xiii. p. 25—29. Davila, p. 1430—1432. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 43, 44, and p. 86, 87.

had

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had levelled or captured the principal bulwarks of Picardy, thus opening to themselves an easy entrance into all the interior provinces of France; Henry applied for assistance, to his antient ally, Elizabeth. Marshal Bouillon, placed at the head of an embassy, was dispatched for the purpose, to the court of London; but many causes, by contributing to weaken the English Queen's affection, had diminished at the same time her esteem for the King. His change of religion unquestionably operated as not the least of these motives, however strongly that measure might be dictated and justified by state necessity. Elizabeth's revenues, even with her frugal management, were moreover unequal to the vast expenditure required to oppose Philip the Second in Europe, and on the continent of America, or in the West Indies. Her whole reign constituted in fact only a state of open war, or of indirect hostility with him; the energy of her people supplying the deficiency or the poverty of the crown. She was compelled to watch with unremitting vigilance over Ireland, to which exposed and ill administered country, Spain directed its constant attacks: the Dutch commonwealth, reared by her care, still required her superintending protection; and she had, at different periods, advanced a vast sum to Henry himself, of which money she vainly demanded restitution. Convinced nevertheless of the magnitude and reality of the danger with which she was menaced in common with France, by the alarming progress of the Spaniards; and peculiarly

Impediments to a treaty, between Henry and Elizabeth.

CHAP. V.

liarly sensible to the vicinity of such formidable neighbours, now become possessed of Calais, in addition to their Flemish dominions; — impressed by these considerations, she at length consented to sign a new treaty with the King. The stipulations, which were offensive, bound the contracting parties to make the strongest efforts against their mutual enemies; a place being specifically reserved for the accession of the States General of Holland, who at the distance of some months afterwards, entered into the alliance. [x]

1596. 26th May. Alliance, concluded.

21st Oct.

The Cardinal Arch-duke, after the termination of his military exploits in France, did not by any means resign himself to inactivity. Turning his arms against the Dutch, who under the conduct of Maurice, Prince of Orange, maintained a continual war with the crown of Spain in the Netherlands; he invested Hulst, an important town of Brabant, not far removed from Antwerp. The place was defended with far greater skill, as well as perseverance, than he had experienced in the attack of Calais; its surrender, after a long and spirited resistance, being dearly purchased by the loss of Rosne, who directed the operations, and who fell in the assault. To his eminent talents, propelled by an implacable animosity against Henry, may in a great degree be ascribed the splendid successes which attended Fuentes and Al-

Siege of Hulst. July.

18th Aug.

Death of Rosne.

[x] De Thou, vol. xii. p. 647—671. Chron. Nov. vol. iii. p. 625—627. Davila, p. 1422—1424. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 83, 84. Hist. de Bouillon, vol. ii. p. 102—160. Rapin's Hist. of England, vol. vii. p. 546, 547.

bert.

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1596.

bert[y]. Thro'out his life, and peculiarly in the manner of its close, Rosne bore a striking affinity to the Constable Charles of Bourbon. Both equally throwing off their allegiance to their native Prince, carried desolation into France; and both perished by a similar end, Bourbon in the attack of Rome, Rosne at the storm of Hulst. Nor did the enmity of the former individual entail greater calamities on Francis the First, than the antipathy of the latter inflicted on Henry the Fourth. The weakness and lassitude of the French, which incapacitated the King for availing himself of the Arch-duke's absence, prevented any important operation: nor was the autumn otherwise distinguished, than by some incursions of Biron, at the head of a body of cavalry, who repeatedly ravaged the provinces of Artois and Hainault, quite to the suburbs of the city of Arras. These ruinous depredations, which only increased the calamities of war, without materially accelerating its termination, were productive of little glory or benefit.[z]

October. Incursions of Biron, into Artois.

Henry, unable to raise supplies from an exhausted and impoverished country; incapable of compelling by force the Duke of Mercœur to lay down his arms in Brittany; and dreading an insurrection of his Hugonot subjects, who loudly demanded from his gratitude, if not from his policy, an edict of permanent tolera-

[y] Chron. Noven. vol. iii. p. 613—618. De Thou, vol. xiii. p. 41—52.

[z] Davila, p. 1439. De Thou, vol. xiii. p. 52—54. Chron. Nov. vol. iii. p. 620—622.

tion for their religion; far from enjoying repose, could not even provide for his personal security. Pressed by a powerful and victorious enemy on the frontiers, he had recourse to a popular assembly, in order to find expedients for liquidating the public debts, and ameliorating or augmenting the revenue. But, instructed by the experience of his predecessor Henry the Third, he preferred convoking an Epitome or representation of the States General, to the dangerous experiment of calling together the States themselves. A limited number of persons, selected from the nobility, clergy, magistracy, and finance; who, it was naturally supposed, might be easily induced to lend assistance to the crown, from whence they derived their own lustre or support; were assembled for the purpose at Rouen. Henry harangued them with a simplicity, frankness, and brevity, calculated to make the deepest impression on their minds. The wants, aggravated by the critical situation of the monarchy, were indeed too apparent, to need exaggeration, or to require eloquence. Another successful campaign, it was obvious, must enable the Spaniards to carry their arms into the heart of the kingdom; to approach Paris, as Edward the Third had done in the fourteenth century; and to dictate conditions of peace, such as policy or resentment might suggest to the court of Madrid. The assembly, penetrated with a conviction of these facts, after reclaiming the rights and privileges of their respective orders, adopted various resolutions for enabling

1596. Convocation of an assembly, at Rouen.

4th Nov.

Resolutions framed in it.

CHAP. V.

enabling the King to raise temporary supplies, by new impositions. He was not long however in perceiving, that it was far easier to grant taxes, than to render them efficient, in the present situation of France. The domain of the crown, as well as the revenues, had fallen into a state of such anticipation and alienation, as to be utterly irretrievable, except by a system of rigorous and radical reform; nor could he venture to undertake so arduous a work, in the midst of a foreign war. Being convinced therefore that he should derive little benefit from the deliberations, or service from the prolongation of the assembly; he shortly afterwards permitted the members to separate, and return to their respective provinces. [a]

1596.

1597. Scarcely had he revisited the capital, and made preparations for opening the campaign with effect, when an event equally alarming and unexpected, reducing the kingdom to extremities, seemed to menace him with misfortunes greater than those, which he had suffered from the faction of "the League." Portocarrero, the Spanish governor of Dourlens, an officer of equal capacity and decision, conceived the design of surprizing Amiens; the protection of which city had been entrusted to the citizens, by Henry's facility, rather than by his negligence. Availing himself of their careless security, Portocarrero approached Amiens with

Portocarrero surprizes Amiens.

[a] Sully, vol. i. p. 334—341. Chron. Nov. vol. iii. p. 628, 629. De Thou, vol. xiii. p. 18—25. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 87—89. Davila, p. 1441, 1442. Memoires de Chiverny, vol. i. p. 387—390.

a con-

a considerable force, during the night; while a few soldiers of approved valor, disguised as peasants or waggoners, entered the place. By an ingenious contrivance, some of them amused the guard; till the others, drawing their concealed weapons, made themselves masters of one of the gates, and instantly admitted their companions. With such admirable skill were the measures taken, and such was the promptitude, silence, and intrepidity, exerted in executing them, that the capital of Picardy, in open day, was seized on by the Spaniards. Fifteen thousand inhabitants capable of bearing arms, after a slight and ineffectual resistance, were disarmed by about three thousand of the enemy. Scarcely any effusion of blood accompanied an enterprize, at once so bold, and so important in its nature. Portocarrero, whose genius had planned it, lost not an instant in endeavouring to render the possession secure; and the governor having fled on the first intimation of the danger, no effort was made by the French, for recovering the city. [b]

CHAP. V. 1597. 11th Mar.

The consternation which the intelligence occasioned in the court, as far as we can judge from contemporary authority, was not exceeded by the alarm consequent on the battle of Pavia, when Francis the First was made prisoner; nor by the defeat of St. Quentin under Henry the Second, where the Constable Montmorency,

Consternation occasioned by its capture.

[b] Davila, p. 1442—1446. De Thou, vol. xiii. p. 103—108. Chron. Nov. vol. iii. p. 667—669. D'Aub. Hist. Univ. vol. iii. p. 386—388. Memoires de Chiverny, vol. i. p. 391—396.

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and the flower of the French nobility, fell into the hands of the Spaniards[c]. Paris, the metropolis of the kingdom, became in some measure, after the loss of Amiens, a frontier place, no longer secure from insult and attack; the whole intermediate country from the banks of the Somme, to those of the Seine, being open, as well as destitute of garrisons, or of fortresses. It is in fact difficult to conceive, if Spain had remained in possession of its recent acquisition, that Paris could have continued to constitute the capital of France; and it must have become requisite to remove the seat of government from the Seine, to the Loire. The terror natural in such a situation, was augmented by the general dissatisfaction. Those persons who desired to depreciate the King in the estimation of his subjects, comparing him to Mark Antony, attributed the calamity to his immoderate love of pleasure, and to the influence of his mistress Gabrielle, who enervated his courage, or detained him in dissipation. Even such as judged more favourably of Henry, yet seemed ready to admit that he was only victorious over his own people; and that, formed by nature for civil war, his talents sunk when opposed to foreign enemies: a censure which however severe, was not wholly destitute of foundation[d]. His own constancy appears to have been rudely shaken by so unexpected a reverse, to which he found it difficult to apply any prompt or efficacious remedy. The mis-

Alarming state of France.

Popular discontent.

[c] Sully, vol. i. p. 349.

[d] Davila, p. 1406, 1447.

manage-

management and peculation of the revenue, which incapacitated him for vigorous or continued exertion; rendered it impossible to maintain forces adequate to forming the siege of Amiens, without previously providing for their payment. It could not be doubted that Philip the Second, and the Arch-duke Albert, would make the greatest efforts, however ruinous they might prove to the affairs of the Netherlands, in order to preserve a conquest which gave them entrance into the centre of France. Portocarrero might be expected to bury himself in the ruins of the city which he had acquired with such consummate ability, or to hold out against the assailants, till he should be relieved from Flanders. Despondency aggravated the weight of the calamity; and the factions of the metropolis, suppressed, but not extinct, manifested themselves at a moment of general dejection. [e]

1597. Difficult situation of the King.

Henry, under circumstances so fitted to appal the greatest fortitude, evinced, after recovering from the first shock, that adversity could not incapacitate, though it might agitate and disconcert him. All his measures, replete with wisdom, and adapted to the exigency, were carried into effect with vigor. Biron, detached at the head of those troops which could be immediately assembled, with orders to harrass the garrison, to impede the entrance of provisions into the place, and to straiten Portocarrero on the side of Flanders, executed his commis-

Measures embraced by Henry.

[e] Mezeray, vol. x. p. 92, 93.

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sion with success. The superintendence of the finances was entrusted solely and exclusively to Rosny, known in history by the title of Duke of Sully; a minister who in application, integrity, and frugality, proved himself not inferior to any statesman, of whatever age or nation. The parliament of Paris gave the most disinterested and efficient support to the exertions of the government; and the Duke of Mayenne himself, anxious to erase every impression of his past political life, conducted to the King's assistance a number of his adherents. Pecuniary resources were found in the loyalty or affection of the people; and Henry quitting Paris, repaired to the camp, where his presence, while it diffused satisfaction, accelerated all the military operations. [f]

June.

Condition of the kingdom.

During the interval of more than six months which elapsed between the surprize of Amiens, and the period of its recapture; the interior of the French monarchy was agitated by various factions, which not only disturbed its repose, but seemed to menace its very existence. The struggle between the two crowns of France and Spain, after near twelve years of open war, or of indirect hostilities, seemed to be reduced to a crisis: and such was the precarious nature of Henry's title, as well as the fermentation existing thro'out his dominions, that any further success on the part of his foreign enemies, might

[f] De Thou, vol. xiii. p. 108—111. Davila, p. 1447—1448. Sully, vol. i. p. 352, 353. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 94—96. D'Aub. Hist. Univ. vol. iii. p. 388—390.

have

have produced a general defection or revolution. In Brittany, the Duke of Mercœur, attentive to the event of the siege, renewed his connexions with the court of Madrid, and refused to lay down his arms[g]. All the ability and vigilance of Lesdiguieres, could scarcely repel the inroads of Charles Emanuel, Duke of Savoy, or prevent his entrance into the province of Dauphiné[h]. Ferdinand, great Duke of Tuscany, availing himself of the opportunity afforded him by the calamities of France, seized on two small islands situate near the entrance of the port of Marseilles, which he garrisoned with troops[i]. The Hugonots, irritated against the King, whom they regarded as an apostate; and dissatisfied at his delay in granting them an edict of toleration; not only refused to aid him, but manifested a disposition to have recourse to the most violent expedients[k]. Even in Paris, the partizans of Spain, who held nocturnal assemblies, meditated open insurrection[l]. Many of the nobility, and some of the princes of the blood, despairing of the final extrication of the state, or regarding the misfortunes of their country, as exceeding Henry's ability to remedy; did not hesitate to meet, and to agitate in those secret conferences, propositions of the most treasonable nature.[m]

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Foreign, and domestic.

[g] De Thou, vol. xiii. p. 128—136. Chron. Nov. vol. iii. p. 671—673.
[h] Chron. Nov. vol. iii. p. 673—678.
[i] Mezeray, vol. x. p. 98, 99.
[k] Ibid. p. 99—101.
[l] Ibid. p. 96.
[m] De Thou, vol. xiii. p. 136—137.

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1597. Siege of Amiens. July.

While symptoms of such universal effervescence and discontent appeared throughout the kingdom, the attention of Europe was fixed on the transactions before Amiens, where the whole science of war, as known and practised at the conclusion of the sixteenth century, was displayed by the two powers. The activity and courage of Portocarrero repeatedly repelling the assailants, long frustrated or retarded their operations. But, as the garrison, diminished by fatigue, sickness, and the sword, became unequal to contending with an enemy, whose numbers were perpetually recruited; an indispensable necessity existed on the part of the Spanish government, either to march to its relief, or to expect its ultimate surrender. Portocarrero implored the Arch-duke not to suffer so important a city to be lost, without making an effort for its preservation; and that prince, however feebly supported by Philip the Second on this great occasion, wanted no exhortations to excite him to the performance of his duty. Though labouring under many impediments, and at the hazard of abandoning the Netherlands to the incursions of Maurice, Prince of Orange, who only waited for the signal of his departure, in order to invade the provinces along the Yssel; Albert having assembled a considerable army, advanced towards the borders of Picardy. He found himself nevertheless from a variety of causes, unable to appear in sight of the besieged, before the death of Portocarrero had taken place. A musquet ball which entered his left side, while exposed to a severe

August. Death of Portocarrero.

severe fire, terminating his life, deprived Spain of so illustrious a subject. The command was immediately conferred by unanimous consent, on the Marquis of Montenegro, who approved himself worthy of the distinction.[n] CHAP. V. 1597. 3d Sept.

Albert comes to the relief of Amiens.

Albert, long and impatiently expected, at length drew near to the northern bank of the Somme: but such appears to have been the culpable negligence, or the inconceivable security of the French, aggravated by the want of all precaution on the part of the King himself, that no adequate preparations had been made to oppose, or to repel the Spaniards. 15th Sept. Universal alarm and confusion ensued on their approach, which were augmented by Henry's absence; who, unapprehensive of any danger, had gone out to take the diversion of the chace. All the efforts of Biron and the other commanders, could neither dissipate the panic, nor restore the confidence of the troops. Already the enemy, in the anticipation of victory, appeared ready to commence their attack; when the Arch-duke, personally unskilled in the conduct of military operations, though himself of unquestionable courage, and ill advised by those persons who surrounded him, issued orders to halt the troops. The short delay of three hours, at so critical a juncture, decided the fate of Amiens, and probably the destiny of France. When the irretrievable error committed by the Spaniards, became apparent,

Loses the occasion of attacking Henry.

[n] De Thou, vol. xiii. p. 113—118. Davila, p. 1448—1463. D'Aub. Hist. Univ. vol. iii. p. 390.

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1597. the moment of action was lost: nor could it be esteemed among the least singular events of the day, that the Duke of Mayenne, who had so nearly overturned the monarchy only a few years before; conduced eminently to its preservation in this hour of crisis, by causing cannon to be placed upon the most accessible quarter of the royal camp. Repelled in every subsequent attempt which he made either to force the lines, or to throw reinforcements into the city; harrassed by the cavalry of the King, and incapable from want of provisions, of protracting his stay in a country completely ravaged; the Archduke began his retreat towards Flanders. If the enterprize had been entrusted to a general of greater capacity than Albert; if the Duke of Parma had survived, or even if Rosne had not perished in the preceding campaign; we may pronounce that according to all appearances, the siege of Amiens would have been raised in consequence of the approach of the Spaniards. It is difficult to conjecture, and impossible to ascertain, the probable results of such a disaster to France, under the existing circumstances of the monarchy: these speculations do not belong to history, whose province is to record events; but we are justified in supposing, that they must have proved of the most calamitous nature. [o]

Retreats.

[o] Davila, p. 1463—1469. Chron. Nov. vol. iii. p. 679—685. De Thou, vol. xiii. p. 118—124. D'Aub. Hist. Univ. vol. iii. p. 390—393. Memoires de Chiverny, vol. i. p. 396—404.

Albert

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Albert, tho' he proved unable to effect the principal object of his expedition, by relieving Amiens, nevertheless retreated into the Netherlands without sustaining any loss. Henry, at the head of all his cavalry, hanging upon the rear, continually attempted to charge, or to disorder them: but, such was the admirable discipline, and superior military skill of the Spanish infantry, as to render ineffectual every effort of the King. He returned therefore, to the camp before Amiens, which city, hopeless of succour, capitulated on honorable terms. Elated with his success, he entered the province of Artois, advanced to the vicinity of Arras, and endeavoured to provoke the Arch-duke to hazard an action. So exhausted nevertheless were the French forces, and so unequal to attempting any enterprize of difficulty, that Henry was compelled soon afterwards to relinquish the siege of Dourlens, which he had imprudently and precipitately commenced. Satisfied therefore, with having obliged the Spaniards to retire; master of Amiens, the prize for which he contended; and unable to keep the field with an army diminished by diseases; he returned to Paris, where his arrival was celebrated with acclamations. [p]

1597.

Surrender of Amiens. 25th Sept.

October.

Henry returns to Paris.

November.

The ill success of Albert, and his consequent retreat into the Netherlands, by disconcerting the vast projects which the court of Madrid

Motives of Henry,

[p] De Thou, vol. xiii. p. 125—128. Davila, p. 1469—1472. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 108—110. Chron. Nov. vol. iii. p. 685—688. Sully, vol. i. p. 368.

had

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had formed, not without apparent foundation, on the permanent possession of Amiens, disposed the two crowns to peace. Henry, who, during the greater part of his life, had been compelled to combat danger and adversity in every shape, anxiously desired to taste repose. He dreaded the instability of fortune, and he had acquired the highest reputation, by his triumph over Spain and "the League." The factions of France, inveterate and powerful, required time as well as address, to effect their extinction. His revenues, which were dissipated by mismanagement, and wholly unequal to prosecuting the war with vigor, could only be re-established by tranquillity. Nor had Philip less cogent, tho' less apparent motives, to desire the termination of the war. Approaching fast to the close of life, he was sinking under bodily infirmities or diseases, which impaired the energy of his counsels. His only son, Philip, heir to the vast dominions of the Spanish monarchy, young and inexperienced, manifested a very feeble capacity. The hostilities in which he was involved with England and Holland, occupied his arms on both elements: during the short expedition of the Arch-duke for the relief of Amiens, Maurice, Prince of Orange, had completely expelled the remaining garrisons of Philip, from every part of the northern provinces of Groningen, Friesland, and Overyssel.

and of Philip the Second,

to desire peace.

In addition to these reasons, he had already determined on giving his daughter Clara Isabella's hand to Albert; endowing her at the

same time with the Low Countries, as a fief to be held of the crown of Spain. His finances, scarcely less exhausted than those of Henry, had recently reduced him to the humiliating necessity of violating his faith to the creditors of the state, by withholding payment of his debts, as he had already done at an earlier period of his reign. Under circumstances so imperious, he lent a ready ear to the first propositions of a pacific nature, which were made to him through the medium of the court of Rome. Clement the Eighth, desirous to unite the Christian powers against the Turks, who, feebly opposed by Rodolph the Second in Hungary, made the most alarming progress towards the Austrian frontiers, under Amurath the Third; exerted all the influence of the pontifical authority, to terminate the inveterate quarrel between France and Spain. Commissioners, named by each crown, acting under the mediation of the Papal legate, assembled therefore at Vervins, a small town on the frontiers of Picardy. Notwithstanding the numerous and intricate points requisite to be adjusted on both sides, previous to a final accommodation; yet, such was the mutual disposition felt to vanquish them, that the negotiation advancing rapidly, promised a favorable issue. [q]

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1598.

Mediation of the court of Rome.

February. Conferences at Vervins.

Among all the principal adherents of "the League," the Duke of Mercœur alone still persisted in his rebellion, though every decent or

Conduct of the Duke of Mercœur.

[q] De Thou, vol. xiii. p. 195, 196. Davila, p. 1473, 1474. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 113—115. Sully, vol. i. p. 375.

osten-

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ostensible pretext for continuing in arms against his sovereign, had been removed by Henry's abjuration and absolution. His hopes of retaining the duchy of Brittany, which he had tyrannized during a number of years; and the prospect of dissevering that fine province from the monarchy of France, as it existed previous to the marriage of Anne of Bretagne with Charles the Eighth;—these motives induced him to refuse every offer of accommodation. Even after the re-capture of Amiens, though he had consented to renew the truce with the royalists, he betrayed no disposition towards peace. The King, who was therefore exhorted to repair in person, at the head of his forces, to that quarter of the kingdom, executed the resolution without delay. At his approach, the frontier garrisons which held for Mercœur in Anjou and Poitou, on whose resistance he had relied for covering Brittany from attack, instantly submitting, returned to their duty. So unexpected a defection left him exposed to immediate hostilities: nor had he any alternative, except to implore pardon for his rebellion; or to sustain a siege in the city of Nantes, whose inhabitants, he dreaded, might seize, and deliver him up to his offended prince. Thus situated, Mercœur wisely preferred the former expedient. His only daughter, heiress to the vast possessions of the family of Penthievre, and allied to the antient Dukes of Brittany, in right of her mother, was made the sacrifice to propitiate Henry.

February.

He submits to the King.

Gabrielle

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Gabrielle d'Etrees, always attentive to the interests of her children, became the mediatress of a reconciliation; in consequence of which, her eldest son, Cæsar, espoused the young princess. He was invested at the same time, by the King his father, with the duchy and patrimonial estates of Vendome, which being thus dissevered from the crown, were conferred on Gabrielle's issue. The espousals took place with equal solemnity and magnificence, in presence of the court, though the youth of the two parties prevented the immediate consummation of the nuptials; Henry granting in favor of so rich an alliance for his natural son, the most honourable terms to Mercœur. His rebellion was not only pardoned, but justified, as having originated in patriotic motives; and like the Duke of Mayenne, he received from the royal coffers a considerable sum, for the liquidation of his private debts. The government of Brittany was conferred on the young Duke of Vendome. We cannot deny, however much we may regret, that in the whole course of this transaction, Henry appears, not as the sovereign of France, attentive to its interests, and regardful of his public duties; but as the lover of Gabrielle, sacrificing every consideration of a public nature to the gratification of his mistress, and the aggrandizement of his illegitimate offspring. [r]

3d April.

Treaty between them.

[r] De Thou, vol. xiii. p. 196—206. Sully, vol. i. p. 375—377. Chron. Nov. vol. iii. p. 710—712. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 118—123. Mem. de Chiverny, vol. ii. p. 9—12.

A still

CHAP. V.

1598. Demands of the Hugonots.

A still more delicate and important affair, which demanded his attention, called for some immediate, or decisive resolution. The Hugonots, dissatisfied at the continual procrastination of the edict of toleration promised them, seemed to be disposed to take up arms against the crown. Policy, as much as justice and gratitude demanded, that the companions of Henry's adverse fortune, who had demonstrated their loyalty even to his predecessor, and who had so eminently conduced to place himself upon the throne; should not remain the only description of his subjects, excluded from general pardon and protection. Moved by these considerations, as well as apprehensive of the resentment of so powerful and numerous a body, who if they should have recourse to foreign interposition, might even impede the conclusion of a peace with Spain; the King, after mature reflexion, granted them an edict, which has always been denominated, from the city in which it was framed, the "Edict of Nantes." That of Poitiers, promulgated by Henry the Third in 1577, constituted its basis. If we candidly appreciate the articles of it, we must be compelled to allow, that no more extended toleration could with reason have been demanded on one side; nor with any regard to the public welfare and safety, have been conceded on the other part. The exercise of the reformed religion under some limitations and restrictions, was permitted in every part of France. Every honour, dignity, and employment,

13th April. Edict of Nantes.

Articles accorded to the Protestants.

ment, civil, military, as well as judicial, being thrown open, was rendered common to Catholics and Hugonots. Various cities and places, situate in different provinces of the kingdom, the garrisons of which were paid by the crown, remained as securities to the Protestants, during the term of eight years. Under the shelter of so wise, liberal, and salutary a law, they continued for the greater part of a century, to enjoy repose and protection. Yet, so little were the principles of toleration understood, or practised in that age; and such was the repugnance of the zealous Catholics, against admitting the professors of the reformed religion to any participation of civil rights; that Henry did not venture to publish it, till after the departure of the Papal Legate from France. Even when in the ensuing year, the edict was brought before the parliament of Paris, in order to receive their sanction and verification, the strongest opposition to it arose among the members of that body. It required the personal interference of the King, together with the force of his joint entreaties and menaces, to vanquish their resistance. [s]

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Opposition of the parliament.

While the King was thus beneficially occupied in restoring order to the province of Brittany, in extinguishing the remains of "the League," and in diffusing tranquillity over the

Impediments to the conclusion of peace.

[s] D'Aub. Hist. Univ. vol. iii. p. 533—535. Hist. de France, par Matthieu, a Paris, 1614, vol. i. liv. ii. p. 197—261. De Thou, vol. xiii. p. 208, and p. 373—386. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 123, 124. Hist. de Bouillon, vol. ii. p. 198, 199. Journal d'Henry IV., vol. i. p. 206, 207.

interior

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interior portion of his dominions, by quieting the alarm of his Hugonot subjects; the ministers of the two crowns at Vervins, proceeded rapidly in the great work of peace. The principal impediment to its conclusion, arose even less from the discordant pretensions of Henry and Philip, than from the inflexible pertinacity of Charles Emanuel, Duke of Savoy. That prince, whose natural ambition was inflamed and heightened by the recent success of his arms over Lesdiguieres, from whom he had reconquered the province of Maurienne, and made other acquisitions; peremptorily refused to relinquish the Marquisate of Saluzzo, seized by him in violation of subsisting treaties, during the reign of Henry the Third. If the embassadors of the Catholic King had steadily supported him, the negotiations appeared to be on the point of total suspension: but their cold or equivocal efforts in his favour, compelled him to relax in his demand. It was at length agreed, in order not to retard the pacification between the potentates principally interested, that the affair of Saluzzo should be referred to the arbitration of the Pope, who was bound to decide on it within the space of a year. Charles Emanuel restored to France the little town of Berre in Provence, which constituted his sole remaining acquisition beyond the Alps.[t]

Saluzzo.

Treaty with Savoy.

[t] Mezeray, vol. x. p. 116—118. De Thou, vol. xiii. p. 210, 211. Matthieu, vol. i. liv. i. p. 59—61.

The

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1598. May.

The warm opposition made by the Queen of England, as well as by the States General of Holland, delayed the publication, but could not finally prevent the accomplishment of peace. Elizabeth remonstrated, reproached, and made by the mouth of her ministers, the greatest offers of assistance, military no less than naval, in order to enforce the prosecution of hostilities. But Henry, secure of obtaining from Philip by negotiation, all the objects that he could hope to regain by force, if he continued to act in conjunction with his allies; pleaded not without reason, in extenuation for breach of his engagements, the exhausted condition of France. He even offered to include her, as well as the States of Holland, by name, in the treaty; but his proposition was rejected by both powers, as being equally contrary to the independence of the Dutch, and to the interests of the English[u]. The King having therefore fulfilled at least the demonstrations of friendship towards his confederates, no longer hesitated to sign a peace, which secured to him more and greater acquisitions, than he could have expected from the most prosperous campaign. Except the County of Charolois, which formed a small dependancy of Burgundy, he had not conquered, nor did he possess, any portion of the Spanish monarchy. Philip on his part restored, besides several frontier fortresses of Picardy, the two important towns and harbours, of Calais, and of Blavet in Brittany.

Opposition of England and Holland.

Conclusion of peace.

[u] Sully, vol. i. p. 380, 381. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 125—127.

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1598.

Considerations on the treaty of Vervins.

If we reflect on the facility which these maritime places, the keys of the monarchy, afforded him of landing forces, and of invading France in her most vulnerable quarters; when we recollect that Calais had been held above two hundred years by the English kings; lastly, if we consider the enormous expenditure of treasure which those acquisitions cost him, and the difficulty of their being reconquered by an enemy so exhausted as Henry; we shall admit that at a more active period of his reign, the Catholic King would not have acquiesced in so inglorious a treaty. Nor could he be insensible to the value of such sacrifices and restitutions. The possession of Calais placed in him in the position of Edward the Third and of Henry the Fifth, who had shaken France to the foundations. But he was already sinking under the diseases, which shortly afterwards conducted him to the grave; and his anxiety to devolve the Spanish monarchy on his successor, unembarrassed by a foreign war, augmented as he approached the close of life. The Arch-duke Albert on his side, not less impatient to accomplish his projected marriage with the Infanta, and apprehensive lest any unforeseen impediment to its completion might arise, accelerated the progress of the negotiation. Cambray alone, of all the captures made from the French, was retained by Spain, as having been reconquered from an usurper, and not taken from its rightful prince. If the peace of Cateau, made by Philip near forty years preceding, with

Its beneficial effects to France.

Henry

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1598. 12th June.

Henry the Second, was justly considered to be in many respects injurious and dishonourable to France; the treaty of Vervins seemed equally advantageous and beneficial to the French crown. While it covered Henry with personal glory, as the restorer of the monarchy, it proportionately humbled the house of Austria, which had so long diffused terror over Europe. Its publication was every where accompanied with testimonies of joy, as the signal and commencement of a new period of national felicity[x]. Biron, raised by the King, to the rank of a Duke and peer, in consideration of his services to the crown, was dispatched to Brussels, in order to swear on the part of his master, to the faithful observance of the articles. He was received with honors and distinctions above the condition of a subject, flattered by extravagant encomiums on his valor, and treated as the preserver of France. The insidious poison of such praises, operating on a mind already distempered by ambition, arrogant, and deeming every recompence below its merits; became eventually productive of most fatal consequences. It shook his fidelity and allegiance, excited convulsions in the state, and finally conducted Biron himself to a premature and ignominous death.[y]

26th June. Biron is sent to Brussels.

[x] De Thou, vol. xiii. p 209—213. Matthieu, vol. i. liv. i. p. 47—66. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 128—130. Journal d'Henry IV. vol. i. p. 187—192. Mem. de Chiverny, vol. ii. p. 13—21. Cayet. Chron. Septennaire, a Paris, 1605, p. 8—11.

[y] Mem. de Chiverny, vol. ii. p. 22—25. Matthieu, vol. i. liv. i p. 75—83. De Thou, vol. xiii. p. 218. Journal d'Henry IV., vol. i. p. 192, 193. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 156, 157. Sully, vol. i. p. 391, 392.

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State of France, at the conclusion of the peace of Vervins. — First measures of Henry. — Death of Philip the Second. — Ambitious projects of Gabrielle d'Etrées. — Her death. — Fermentation and discontents in the kingdom. — Divorce of the King. — Amours of Henry. — Visit of the Duke of Savoy. — Ineffectual negotiation of that Prince. — His return. — Domestic transactions. — War with Savoy. — Rapid progress of the French arms. — Inactivity of the Duke of Savoy. — Conferences for peace. — Marriage of Henry, with Mary of Medicis. — Conclusion of the treaty with Savoy. — Reflections on it. — Birth of the Dauphin. — Internal regulations. — Alliance renewed with the Switzers. — Commotions in Poitou. — Conspiracy of Biron, revealed by La Fin. — Arrest of Biron. — His trial and execution. — Reflections on that event.

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BY the treaty of Vervins, Henry the Fourth beheld himself at length the undisputed possessor of the crown of France. After having vanquished the most powerful faction which ever arose in any state, and which had nearly accomplished the destruction of the monarchy; his valor, constancy, and fortune, had finally surmounted all the efforts of foreign enemies. Philip the Second, his inveterate and implacable rival, had not only recognized his title, but had restored all the conquests made during the period of anarchy and commotion, which followed the death of the late King Henry the Third. France, which for the space of near forty years, ever since the accession of Francis

1598. July. Situation of Henry.

Francis the Second, had been desolated by its own citizens; once more resumed its antient situation and weight in the system of Europe: nor, if we except the little Marquisate of Saluzzo, situated beyond the limits of the monarchy, among the mountains of the Alps, had a single fortress or town been dismembered from the kingdom. But, a more toilsome and laborious, though a less brilliant task, remained to be accomplished; the restoration of general order and morals, the revival of industry, the alleviation of the public misery, together with the diffusion of tranquillity, civilization, and obedience to the laws. To Louis the Eighteenth, France now looks for similar exertions, after the miseries that she has endured under her Corsican master. It required talents widely different from those which Henry had hitherto exerted, to produce these beneficial changes; and the qualities of a general would be found of little avail, without the wisdom and policy of a legislator. It is in the latter capacity that we are henceforward principally to contemplate him; a character in which, by an uncommon example of felicity, he may be said, though not without some reserves, to lay the strongest claim to esteem and admiration.

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France, at the restoration of peace, had suffered almost every calamity by which a state could be afflicted, except the extinction of its existence and independance as a nation. The majesty of the crown had been degraded by the pusillanimity, and polluted by the vices, of the last prince of the family of Valois. His dissi-

State of France,

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pation had anticipated the revenues, alienated the royal domains, and involved the finances in almost inextricable ruin. The sanctity of the laws was violated, and the asylum of justice itself had been converted into an engine of oppression. Paris, the capital of the kingdom, garrisoned by Neapolitans and Walloons, besieged by hostile armies, pressed by famine without, and tyrannized by faction within; presented only an emaciated and extenuated shadow of its former population, opulence, and prosperity. The nobility, accustomed to all the licentious violence of civil war, acted like the despots of a conquered country, and practised with impunity, every outrage on the inferior orders. Abuses equally subversive of piety, as they were contrary to decorum, which had crept into the Gallican church, required the most vigorous exertion to eradicate among the ecclesiastics. Commerce languished without encouragement: manufactures declined: many of the public roads had totally disappeared under thorns and briars; while the communication from one province to another, was become dangerous and precarious for travellers. Fastnesses and castles, which covered the country, served as retreats to numbers of Banditti; who, whether they adhered to the royal cause, or to the party of "the League," proved alike the scourges of the people. The unfortunate peasant, pursued by rapacious collectors of the revenue, destitute of protection, pillaged, insulted, and despised, found himself reduced to the last stage of poverty, and

and of Paris.

Commerce.

scarcely hoped for any salutary change in his condition. [a] France in 1814, presents the same features which characterized it in 1598, and requires the same remedies for its resuscitation. 1598.

From such a complication of misfortunes, become inveterate by long prescription, only time, wisdom, and the most lenient efforts, could extricate a great nation. The first measures of the King were judiciously directed towards the preservation of public tranquillity, safety, and property. In order to protect his subjects against the outrages of such individuals, as being disbanded from the military service, by the reduction of the regular forces on the accomplishment of peace, might have recourse to violence for procuring subsistence; he issued an edict, prohibiting under severe penalties, the carrying of fire-arms [b]. A great diminution of the cavalry and infantry was immediately made: but, in order to qualify a step, which, however useful and necessary it might be, was at once delicate and dangerous, permission was given to subjects of all ranks, to serve in Flanders, and in Hungary [c]. The clergy having held an assembly of their own body, in the metropolis, which convocation demanded from Henry, the speedy reform of the venality, simony, and prostitution of ecclesiastical preferments, that dishonoured the church; he replied to them with equal dignity, condescension, and circumspection. His

Measures of the King.

4th Aug.

September.

[a] Matthieu, vol. i. liv. i. p. 151, 152.

[b] De Thou, vol. xiii. p. 218, 219. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 132. Matthieu, vol. i. liv. i. p. 152, 153.

[c] Matthieu, vol. i. liv. i. p. 153, 154.

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speech, which is worthy of Titus of Trajan, or of Marcus Aurelius, manifested at once his zealous attachment to the Catholic religion, and his consciousness that all expedients of severity or violence, would only aggravate instead of alleviating the evil [d].

Remission of taxes.

A remission of the vast arrears of taxes due from the people, but which debt their poverty rendered them incapable of paying, was granted to their necessity. Commissioners were sent into the provinces, empowered to make enquiry, and to report on the abuses or grievances of every kind; and the letters or patents of nobility, which during the late reign, had formed one of the disgraceful modes adopted to fill the royal treasury, underwent a rigorous examination [e]. The finances, which under three successive princes, during a long period of minority, confusion, and civil war, had attained to the utmost point of subversion and ruin; having assumed a new form, were managed with consummate skill. Henry's frugality, a quality in which he bore a striking resemblance to Elizabeth, was sustained by the inflexible integrity and parsimonious vigilance of the Superintendant, Rosny, the *Burleigh* of France. The kingdom, liberated from the ravages of foreign and domestic hostilities, began already to feel the effects of a wise administration; and to enter upon that period of its history, which, if

Reform made in the finances.

[d] De Thou, vol. xiii. p. 220, 221. Matthieu, vol. i. liv. i. p. 160—163. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 133, 134.

[e] Matthieu, vol. i. liv. i. p. 159—160.

we

we compare it with the times by which it was preceded, or with those which followed it, may perhaps deserve with more justice than any other portion of the French annals, the epithet of the golden Age. [f]

Death of Philip the Second. 13th Sept.

Philip the Second did not long survive, to taste the beneficial effects of that peace, for the attainment of which object he had made such important national sacrifices. Extenuated by the attacks of a cruel and loathsome disease which baffled every effort to check its progress, he surmounted his bodily sufferings by a constancy and serenity of mind above all eulogium, and of which superiority, human nature offers few examples. The sanity of his intellect, and the perspicuity of his judgment, were neither diminished nor obscured by the decay of his frame, by advanced age, nor by the most acute pain. Unlike his father Charles, who abdicated the throne, Philip, tenacious of power, continued down to the last moments of his life, to retain and to exercise the supreme authority. Anxious to secure his acquittal at the awful tribunal where he felt that he must speedily appear, and perhaps impressed with remorse for many sanguinary acts of his reign; he had recourse to all the superstitious observances or practices, inculcated by credulity and terror.

Dispositions of that prince.

Desirous to prolong his dominion beyond the grave, like Louis the Eleventh, he laid down the most specific injunctions for the political conduct of his only son; while he secured to

[f] Mezeray, vol. x. p. 159.

his

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his favorite daughter Clara Isabella, the rich inheritance of the Low Countries, dissevered in her favor from the mass of the Spanish monarchy[g]. With him may be said to have sunk that enormous and gigantic power, which had so long menaced, invaded, and even nearly at times subjected Europe. Only the shadow, rather than the substance, survived under his feeble successors, who found themselves incapable of propelling into vigorous action, a disjointed, torpid, and exhausted machine. The incapacity of Philip the Third, his indolence, and inaptitude for affairs of state, augmented and rendered incurable, the inherent diseases of the monarchy. Spain, under his inefficient government, continued essentially, though during some years not ostensibly, to decline; as France from the same æra, rose with similar rapidity, in the scale of European powers.

The stability of the crown, and the tranquillity of the kingdom, might be said nevertheless to repose on a very precarious basis, while Henry remained destitute of male legitimate issue to inherit his dominions. Not only the tender age of his presumptive successor, the young Prince of Condé, who had not yet passed the limits of childhood, might raise competitors to the throne; but the ambiguous and tragical circumstances that preceded his birth, rendered his title itself subject to question. Appre-

[g] DeThou, vol. xiii. p. 225—238. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 134—137. Matthieu, vol. i. liv. i. p. 95—148. Memoires de Chiverny, vol. ii. p. 30—42. Sully, vol. i. p. 408, 409. Chron. Septenn. p. 24—31.

hensions

hensions were justly entertained that in case of Henry's decease, the ambition of the Count of Soissons, a younger son of Louis, Prince of Condé, or the factions latent in the vitals of the country, would involve France in new calamities.[h] Gabrielle d'Etrées, recently created Duchess of Beaufort, already nourished and matured the project of attaining the rank of Queen. Her extraordinary personal beauty, in which endowment she seems to have equalled Agnes Soreille, the mistress of Charles the Seventh; sustained by the amenity of her manners, and the charms of her society; had given her an almost unbounded ascendant over her lover, to whom she had recently borne a second son. The beneficence of her natural disposition, which disposed her to acts of generosity, had procured her numerous adherents in the court; nor, if the external graces of her deportment, and even the qualities of her mind alone were considered in such a selection, did she appear to be wholly unworthy of the elevation. Henry himself betrayed a disposition to legitimate his union with her, and even ventured indirectly to sound the Papal Legate on the subject. But, that prelate, conscious of the fatal consequences to the tranquillity of France, which must inevitably result from the completion of such a measure, declined all interference in its negotiation or accomplishment. Even Margaret of Valois herself, though immured in a fortress among

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Gabrielle d'Etrées.

Her character.

Impediments to Henry's divorce.

[h] Matthieu, vol. i. liv. ii. p. 376, 377.

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1598. among the mountains of Auvergne, where she had long been forgotten; and tho' not averse to the proposition of dissolving her marriage, in order that the King might be enabled to give heirs to the state; yet peremptorily refused her consent to a divorce, if Gabrielle was destined to occupy her place[i]. In defiance nevertheless of these impediments, she not only

1599. persisted in her design; but Sillery, one of the most able ministers of that period, was sent to Rome, with injunctions to press a speedy deci-

January. sion in her favor. Clement, averse to gratify the King at the expence of decorum, and at the hazard of entailing endless misfortunes on the kingdom, interposed many delays to the course of proceeding; though it seems probable that they would have been easily or finally surmounted, if the premature death of the Duchess, which took place soon afterwards, had not arrested and overturned her inordinate projects of ambition.[k]

29th Jan. Marriage of the Princess Catherine.

Catherine, Princess of Navarre, the daughter of Anthony of Bourbon and Jane d'Albret, Henry's only sister, became a sacrifice to state Policy, at this time. She espoused the Duke of Bar, eldest son and heir of the Duke of Lorrain; the two parties being equally victims to the measure sadopted by their respective courts. Catherine, who possessed scarcely any attractions

[i] Sully, vol. i. p. 427, 428.

[k] Amours d'Henry IV., a Leyde, 1663, p. 53—56. Sully, vol. i. p. 382—386, and p. 404—407. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 139, 140, and p. 143, 144. Chiverny, vol. ii. p. 76—79.

either

either intellectual or personal, was distinguished by an inflexible attachment to the tenets of the reformed religion. On the other hand, the bigotted scruples of her husband, a zealous Catholic; and the advanced age of the Princess, which rendered it improbable that she ever could produce issue; conduced to seal their mutual infelicity. Scarcely could any prelate be persuaded to pronounce over them the nuptial benediction, on account of the diversity of their religious faith; the interposition of the King's authority becoming requisite, to surmount the repugnance manifested by the ecclesiastics on the occasion.[1] 1599.

Disputes relative to Saluzzo.

The dispute existing between Henry and the Duke of Savoy, relative to the Marquisate of Saluzzo, which contested point, by an article of the treaty of Vervins, had been referred to the arbitration of the Papal See; far from advancing to a termination, seemed to be involved in augmenting and almost insuperable difficulties. Charles Emanuel being in possession of the territory litigated, not only refused to transfer, or to entrust it to any person named by Clement, during the continuance of the process; but he attempted to elude a decision, or to corrupt the arbitrator himself. Secretly supported by the court of Madrid in his resistance, determined never to relinquish Saluzzo except by force, and relying on the

[1] Sully, vol. i. p. 416, 417. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 140, 141. Chiverny, vol. ii. p. 59—69. Journal d'Henry IV., vol. i. p. 204, 205. Chron. Sept. p. 64.

reluc-

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reluctance, or the inability of the King to come to a rupture with him; he perpetually invented new subterfuges, in order to evade a surrender of his usurpation. Yet, conscious of the inferiority of his strength in such a conflict, and deprecating hostilities with so powerful a sovereign; he expressed on every occasion his readiness to terminate the affair, thro' the medium of pacific and amicable negotiation.[m]

Death of Gabrielle. 10th April.

In the midst of these transactions of policy, at the moment when her schemes seemed apparently to be on the point of completion, Gabrielle d'Etrees was carried off by a death no less sudden than violent it its progress. She expired in convulsions, which tore her frame in pieces even before her dissolution. After the most candid and impartial consideration of all the symptoms, which preceded and accompanied her extraordinary distemper, it is difficult not to suppose that unnatural means of some kind were used to hasten, or to produce her end. It must nevertheless remain among those problematical events common in history, relative to the nature of which, no absolute certainty can be obtained by the keenest investigation. The King, who shewed great sensibility for her loss, appeared at first to be inconsolable; though his heart, incapable of remaining long unoccupied with some object, soon transferred his fondness for Gabrielle, to a new

[m] De Thou, vol. xiii. p. 367—373. Matthieu, vol. i. liv. ii. p. 283—307. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 163—165.

mistress.

mistress. Her transcendant personal charms, and the attractions of her society, constituted her principal merit. She could lay no claim to national esteem or gratitude, like Agnes Soreille, who propelled the languid valor or energies of her royal lover, and excited him to the glorious act of expelling the English from his dominions. But neither was Gabrielle guilty of engaging in treasonable or criminal intrigues with the enemies of France, as the Duchess of Estampes, mistress to Francis the First, had done in 1544, when the Emperor Charles the Fifth, having penetrated into Champagne, menaced Paris. Mark Anthony seems hardly to have been held in more complete subjection by his Egyptian mistress, than Henry displayed towards the Duchess of Beaufort, tho' her fidelity and constancy were as questionable as the virtue of Cleopatra. CHAP. VI. 1599.

In every point of view, her critical decease must be regarded as a most auspicious event for the French monarchy and nation. When we consider the dangers which Henry had surmounted in his attainment of the throne, and the perpetual vigilance which it demanded to retain in subjection a people grown familiar with rebellion and civil war; we cannot sufficiently wonder at his weakness in committing to hazard so vast an acquisition. When we reflect on the wisdom, vigor of design, and affection for his subjects, which characterize and illuminate his general administration; we are penetrated with concern, to behold him sacrificing every public Reflexions on that event.

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consideration to the gratifications of passion. It must indeed be admitted, however reluctantly, that thro'out his whole life, and not less in its decline, than during its meridian, he was, on the article of love, if nevertheless a transitory or criminal impulse can merit that title, inferior in prudence and conduct to ordinary men. His marriage with Gabrielle, had it been accomplished, must have rendered him in some measure contemptible to his own subjects, and to foreign nations; while it would have awakened all the dormant factions of the state, have involved the succession to the crown in obscurity, weakened the energy of the government, and eventually plunged the country into calamities more irremediable, than those from which it was so recently extricated by his valor and policy.[n]

Internal agitation of the kingdom.

France, though no longer in a state of foreign or of internal war, was nevertheles capable from the slighest causes, of being dangerously agitated; like the ocean after a tempest, still continuing to heave with every gust. A wretched mechanic, whose daughter had been taught to counterfeit the contortions of a demoniac, had nearly endangered the tranquillity of the metropolis, and the repose of the kingdom. Such was the credulity, igno-

[n] Amours d'Hen. IV., p. 56—60. Matthieu, vol. i. liv. ii. p. 307—309. De Thou, vol. xiii. p. 388, 389. Journal d'Henry IV., vol. i. p. 211, 212. Chiverny, vol. ii. p. 79—86. Sully, vol. i. p. 421—424. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 144, 145. Chron. Septenn. p. 77, 78.

rance,

rance, and disposition of the lower classes to believe in every absurdity which assumed a supernatural appearance, that they crouded to behold this impostress, and to listen to her imbecile ravings. It was in vain that physicians of the most eminent skill, and prelates of the highest sanctity, declared her to be such: the interference of the royal authority, and the interposition of the parliament of Paris, became necessary to suppress an exhibition, which, it was dreaded, might be converted to purposes of sedition[o]. The "holy maid of Kent" had acted the same farce among us, under Henry the Eighth. The edict of Nantes, however wise, enlarged, and beneficent was its principle, had not the less excited the murmurs of the disaffected, the bigotted, and the intolerant, thro'out France. Discontents prevailed among the nobility, who, accustomed to the licentious disorders of civil war, seemed already weary of a peace, which reduced them to comparative insignificance and dependance on the crown. Biron, incapable of concealing, or of moderating his resentment at the supposed ingratitude of the King towards him; exhaled his anger in complaints, in menaces, and even in opprobrious invectives against his sovereign. His criminal designs already inspired alarm, and he seemed to emulate the example of the late Duke of Guise, assassinated at Blois, under a prince of a different character from Henry the Third[p]. The

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Effects of the edicts of Nantes.

Seditious sermons.

[o] DeThou, vol. xiii. p. 392—407. Matthieu, vol. i. liv. ii. p. 334—342. Journal d'Henry, vol. i. p. 209—211, and p. 213, and p. 216.

[p] Mezeray, vol. x. p. 155—157.

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pulpits of Paris began to resound with insolent and violent declamations, calculated to shake the allegiance of the weak, the superstitious, and the disloyal. All the exertions of the executive government were demanded, to impose silence on these ecclesiastics [q]. More than one desperate fanatic, who had undertaken to assassinate the King, was seized, convicted, and executed for the atrocious design. The horror of the discovery received no small augmentation, from the circumstance of the Papal Nuntio at Brussels, having instigated them to commit so abominable a crime, and even selected his agents from among the monastic orders [r]. It was well known that the court of Spain secretly fomented these seeds of discontent or commotion; thus endeavouring to undermine the foundations of that throne, which their arms had not been able to overturn by violence.

Fanaticism.

Transfer of the Low Countries, to Albert and Isabella.

August.

The sovereignty of the Netherlands had meanwhile been transferred, in virtue of the last dispositions of Philip the Second, to the Infanta, conjointly with the Arch-duke her husband; the young King religiously fulfilling his father's dying injunctions. After the performance of the nuptial ceremony, which took place at Valentia, the Prince and Princess repaired to Brussels; where, with the consent of the states of the Low Countries, they assumed the supreme authority. A new power appeared to arise in the midst of Europe, which, from

[q] Journal d'Henry IV., vol. i. p. 213—215.
[r] De Thou, vol. xiii. p. 417—423.

its central position between France, England, Germany, and Holland, sustained by its maritime strength, industry, and commerce; it was with reason supposed, might materially affect the policy and interests of all the surrounding states or countries. But, when more accurately examined, the independance of Albert and Isabella proved only nominal; Philip having taken ample precautions for securing either the obedience, or the reversion, of those valuable provinces, to his lineal successors in the male line. Even though the Infanta's marriage should become productive of issue, a circumstance very problematical, as she was no longer young; yet so binding were framed the political ties which chained the Netherlands to the Spanish monarchy, that no possible revolution, except that of conquest effected by a foreign enemy, appeared to be capable of weakening, or dissolving the connexion [s]. Nor did the arrival of the new sovereigns in the capital of Flanders, promise any speedy termination to the long war carrying on with the Dutch republic; nor augure any salutary change in the principles and system of its conduct. The offer which the Arch-duke made to the United States of Holland, proposing an accommodation, when he announced to them his approaching nuptials, together with the cession of the Low Countries made by the Catholic King to his daughter; was deemed so inadmissible, as to be rejected by the government to

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Conditions, annexed to it by Spain.

[s] De Thou, vol. xiii. p. 251—255. Matthieu, vol. i. liv. i. p. 178—185. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 137, 138.

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which it was addressed, almost without the forms of consideration. [t]

1599. Divorce of Henry.

The dissolution of Henry's marriage, which had met with some impediments at Rome during Gabrielle d'Etrées' life, advanced rapidly after her decease, to a final determination. Margaret of Valois herself having joined in the supplication to the sovereign pontiff, no legitimate ground for a refusal remained; and the honor of the repudiated princess was carefully preserved in all the juridical proceedings.

10th Nov.

Mutual compulsion, together with the defect of various formalities requisite in the nuptial contract, as well as consanguinity in the second degree;—these alleged facts constituted the pretexts upon which the commissioners named by Clement, proceeded to pronounce between the parties, a sentence of divorce [u]. The parliament of Paris had already addressed the King, in terms of affectionate energy, beseeching him to make choice of a Queen; and they had not scrupled to exhort him to select for his partner in the French throne, a princess of royal or sovereign extraction, as alone worthy of so distinguished an elevation [x]. His two embassadors in Italy, the Cardinal d'Ossat and Sillery, being authorized for the purpose, opened therefore a proposition in his name, at the court of Tuscany, for the hand of Mary of Medicis, niece to the reigning Grand Duke Ferdinand, and

Negotiation begun at Florence.

[t] De Thou, vol. xii. p. 255—257.

[u] Matthieu, vol. i. liv. ii. p. 379—383. De Thou, vol. xiii. p. 430—433. Journal d'Henry IV., vol. i. p. 220, 221.

[x] Matthieu, vol. i. liv. i. p. 375—378.

daughter

daughter to his elder brother Francis, by the Arch-duchess Jane of Austria. The demand being received with testimonies of the highest satisfaction, the nuptials were solemnized by procuration, early in the ensuing year. We are naturally impressed on a first view, with some degree of surprize, that Henry should voluntarily wish to form so intimate a connexion with a family, which not only in its origin, but in dignity, was far beneath the rank of crowned heads. Francis the First, when, with a view of engaging in his interests, Pope Clement the Seventh, he consented to solicit a matrimonial alliance apparently so unequal, had only meditated to raise the Princess of Medicis, to the rank of Duchess of Orleans. His eldest son, the Dauphin Francis, stood then interposed between Catherine and the French throne. When moreover in addition to these circumstances, we consider Henry's sense of the uniform enmity displayed by Catherine of Medicis towards the house of Bourbon, peculiarly towards himself; it seems impossible that he should not have regarded the Tuscan alliance with a species of alienation. On a closer examination of the transaction, it will however be apparent that his choice was in effect dictated by necessity. Neither the Spanish, nor the imperial branch of Austria, possessed at that time, any Princess of an age proper for marriage. Rodolph the Second, Emperor of Germany, remained unmarried; and Philip the Third, King of Spain, himself scarcely out of his minority, had not any sister to offer him: while on the other hand,

CHAP. VI. 1599.

Reflexions on that choice.

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Henry did not judge it consistent with policy or prudence, to enter into a matrimonial union with the daughter of a Protestant sovereign.[y]

1599. Amours of Henry.

Unfortunately for his domestic repose, during the short interval of a few months which elapsed between the decease of Gabrielle, and the first proposal made for his marriage with Mary of Medicis, he had already disposed of his affections, and almost given way his hand. History, which should only commemorate transactions of a national nature, is too frequently compelled to record the vices, the weaknesses, and even the amours of kings. These causes have in every period, influenced materially on the fate of empires, and on the felicity of mankind; nor has this truth, perhaps, ever been more forcibly exemplified, than in perusing the reign under our consideration. If we would love and venerate the character of Henry the Fourth, we must endeavor to consider him exclusively in his kingly capacity, as the conqueror, the restorer, and the father of France. He sinks below the level of ordinary princes, when we inspect his personal and private life; where, by a natural and unavoidable comparison with himself, he appears less, from the recollection and the contrast of his preceding greatness.

Character of Henrietta d'Entragues.

Henrietta d'Entragues was destined to succeed to the place in his attachment, antecedently occupied by Gabrielle d'Etrées. If her personal attractions, strictly considered, did not equal those of her predecessor, she compensated for

[y] Sully, vol. i. p. 382, 383. Matthieu, vol. i. liv. i. p. 384, 385.

the

the mere inferiority of beauty, by all the charms of refined coquetry, gaiety, and superior powers of fascination or amusement. Capricious, mutable, haughty, inflexible, and arrogant, she was destitute of the softness, as well as the equality of temper, which the King had found in the object of his former passion. As Gabrielle resembled Madame de la Valiere in some of the leading features of her character, so in Henrietta we trace all the captivating graces, combined with the insolent demeanour, that distinguished the Marchioness de Montespan. Instructed for the purpose by her mother, the celebrated Mary Touchet, who had been the mistress of Charles the Ninth; and perfectly aware of the predominant weakness of the Prince who pursued her with solicitations, Henrietta artfully inflamed his desires, while she protracted their fruition. Availing herself of his ardor, impatience, and fondness, she at length exacted from him, previous to the surrender of her honor, a formal engagement, stipulating that if in consequence of the gratification of his wishes, she should produce him a son within a year, he would legitimate his connection with her, by raising her to his throne and bed. Henry, in defiance of the generous remonstrances and fruitless opposition made by his friend and minister, Rosny, delivered to her a paper or instrument such as she demanded from him. Our condemnation of the act is greatly augmented, when we reflect that he had already passed the period of life, at which the violence of the passions is usually

1599.

Henry contracts with her an engagement.

CHAP. VI. 1599.

felt, and that he could neither plead youth nor inexperience in his justification. Henrietta, thus furnished with so dangerous a weapon for the invasion of his future tranquillity, submitted to all his desires: but the King, who found frequent reason during the course of his reign, to lament his error, experienced in its fullest extent, the fatal consequences that result from the vengeance of an offended and vindictive woman, stimulated by pride, and destitute of principle. [z]

Charles Emanuel visits France.

Wearied with fruitless endeavours to obtain from Henry the cession or dereliction of the Marquisate of Saluzzo, and confident in his own powers of personal insinuation; the Duke of Savoy embraced the precipitate resolution of repairing to the court of France. Lorenzo de Medicis, so celebrated in the history of Italy during the fifteenth century, had exhibited to the world a similar determination; when, impelled by the expectation of liberating himself and Tuscany from their embarrassments, he embarked from Florence for Naples, in order to mollify Ferdinand, the King of that country. But, the delicate and dangerous experiment, which in the skilful hands of Lorenzo, had been crowned with success, failed in the present instance to produce the same results. Neither the remonstrances of his wisest ministers, nor the apprehension of exciting the jealousy and resentment of Philip the Third, his brother-in-

[z] Sully, vol. i. p. 429—431. Amours d'Henry IV., p. 60—62. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 167, 168. Memoires de Bassompierre a Cologne, 1721, tome i. p. 42—46.

law,

law, could prevail on Charles Emanuel to postpone his design. The coldness with which the proposition when made, was received by the King, produced no alteration whatever on the Duke's conduct. In defiance of winter, having quitted Turin, he descended the Rhone to Lyons; and thence pursuing his journey through the interior provinces to Orleans, he arrived at Fontainbleau. The interview of the two princes which took place at that palace, was accompanied with every external demonstration of amity; and Henry, after a stayof a few days, conducted his guest to Paris, where, during a residence of more than two months, he was amused with continual exhibitions of varied pleasure and magnificence. [a]

CHAP. VI.

1599.

13th Dec. His reception.

But Charles Emanuel was not long in discovering, that the unqualified and immediate restitution of the usurped Marquisate, must precede every attempt made on his part, to establish a friendship, or to form an alliance with the French crown. In vain he exerted by turns, the versatility, the eloquence, and the blandishments, which endowments he eminently possessed, in order to mollify the King. He soon ascertained that Henry was equally inaccessible to the allurements of ambition, to the promises of interest, and to the supplications of humility. Instead of the facility and prodigality which had characterized Henry the Third, he found inflexible firmness, sustained by reason, and only irritated by resistance. His efforts to corrupt, or to remove the principal obstacles to

1600. January.

His negotiations, and intrigues.

[a] Matthieu, vol. i. liv. ii. p. 419—432.

his

CHAP. VI.

1600. Heny rejects them.

his success, proved ineffectual; while the demand which he ventured to make, that Henry should abandon the protection of the city of Geneva, excited universal indignation in the council of state. All his offers to facilitate the conquest of Milan and of Naples, made no impression on a prince already satiated with war, covered with glory, and who intimately felt the necessity of peace, in order to re-invigorate the kingdom. Even the powerful interposition of Henrietta d'Entragues, recently created Marchioness of Verneuil, whom he had engaged in his interests, could not induce the King to depart from his demands; and Charles Emanuel, though possessing almost all the talents or qualities that usually secure political success, beheld himself in a situation at once unfortunate and humiliating, from which he despaired of extrication. [b]

Criminal projects of the Duke of Savoy,

Driven to adopt measures of violence by a treatment that he had not expected, and which he did not venture openly to resent; frustrated in all his hopes, and determined never to yield the territory which he had usurped; the Duke embraced a system which promised him better success. He was well acquainted with the various causes of discontent that existed in the French court and monarchy, nor did he want spies or agents to facilitate all his machinations. By artfully inflaming the secret resentment of

[b] Chron. Septen. p. 98—101. Sully, vol. i. p. 433—435. Matthieu, vol. i. liv. iii. p. 445—448. De Thou, vol. xiii. p. 434—437. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 169—172. Journal d'Henry IV., vol. i. p. 221—223, and p. 227, 228. Guichenon, Hist. de Savoye, vol. i. p. 769, 770.

Biron

Biron against his sovereign; by misrepresentations, adulation, and insidious means of every kind, he totally overturned the allegiance, and seduced the loyalty of that misguided nobleman. Resolutions of a criminal nature, which as it afterwards appeared, were subversive of the repose of France, and even of the throne itself, were entered into between them. A Burgundian gentleman, by name La Fin, to whose treachery and duplicity Biron ultimately fell a victim, carried on the intercourse; and Charles Emanuel, anxious to secure an associate of such high rank, capacity, and resources as Biron, did not hesitate to attach him by promises of the most flattering kind. Time and favorable conjectures seemed alone wanting to mature their plans; nor could occasions fail to present themselves, for carrying into execution their treasonable intentions.[c] CHAP. VI. 1600. with Biron.

As it became nevertheless indispensable to fix a period for the Duke of Savoy's residence in the kingdom, and for concluding some agreement relative to Saluzzo; the commissioners named by the two princes for transacting the affair, at length terminated it by a definitive treaty. The convention, which was optional, left to the Duke the choice, either of restoring within the space of three months, the usurped Marquisate; or of ceding in compensation for it, the County of Bresse, together with Bourg its capital, the castle of Pignerol, Treaty concluded. 27th Feb.

[c] Guichenon, Hist. de Sav. vol. i. p. 772, 773. De Thou, vol. xiii. p. 437—439. Matthieu, vol. i. liv. iii. p. 448—450. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 172—174. D'Aub. Hist. Gen. vol. iii. p. 468—470.

and

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and some other vallies contiguous to the province of Dauphiné. Having signed the conditions, with apparent testimonies of satisfaction, Charles Emanuel quitted the court of France, and returned into his dominions; leaving the King, as well as all those individuals who had approached his person, impressed with sentiments of admiration at the variety of his talents, the magnificence of his donations, the condescension of his manners, and the elevation of his character. Even the injustice of his demands, and the failure of all his efforts for retaining the territory in dispute, could not obscure the lustre of those great qualities; which, if they had not been sullied by ambition, and stained with perfidy or treachery, would have placed him among the most illustrious princes of the age.[d]

1600. 2d March. Return of Charles Emanuel.

Conference of Fontainbleau.

By a singular transition, which strongly characterizes the genius of the period, these negotiations of state were immediately succeeded by controversies of divinity. Du Perron, Bishop of Evreux, a prelate celebrated for the elegance and diversity of his talents, having sent a theological defiance to du Plessis Mornay, one of the Hugonot chiefs, on the subject of a work composed by the latter, upon the doctrine of the Eucharist; the two disputants appeared in person, to defend their respective tenets, at Fontainbleau. Henry, whose whole life had been passed in camps or courts, and

4th May.

[d] Chron. Septenn. p. 110—115. Guichenon, Hist. de Savoye, vol. i. p. 770—772. De Thou, vol. xiii. p. 441—444. Matthieu, vol. i. liv. iii. p. 518—528. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 174, 175. Sully, vol. i. p. 442. D'Aub. Hist. Univ. vol. iii. p. 466—468.

whose

whose amusements or occupations seemed to have little analogy with polemical subjects; was present at the conference, attended by the great officers of the crown, and many of the nobility. He only assumed the quality of spectator, and in some measure of moderator; three persons of eminence having been named arbitrators of the dispute. We may consider as not among the least curious circumstances accompanying it, that the Duke of Mayenne, who only a few years preceding, had opened the convocation of the States General in Paris, as head of "the League," and as the representative of the kingly dignity; assisted at this assembly, in the humble capacity of a private courtier. The partiality of the King, who seemed desirous of sacrificing du Plessis at the shrine of the Papal power; the timidity of the arbitrators; the eloquence of du Perron, accustomed to the subtilties of scholastic controversy; and perhaps the temerity of du Plessis, who had engaged to defend a number of propositions or citations of doubtful authority; — all these combined causes gave to the Catholic champion, an easy victory. It was announced by Henry with testimonies of exultation, little becoming the dignity of his character; and indecent in a Prince, the sincerity of whose conversion to the Romish faith, must always have remained matter of doubt and uncertainty. [e]

1600.

Circumstances attending it.

His

[e] Chron. Sept. p. 125—141. Hist. de du Plessis, liv. ii. p. 260—273. Embassades de du Perron, Paris, 1623, p. 75—78. De Thou, vol.

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1600. 25th April. Conclusion of Henry's marriage.

His marriage with Mary of Medicis, which had been in agitation during several months, being at length finally concluded, was published at Florence, with demonstrations of general joy. The Princess had already passed the flower of youth; but the beauty of her person, and the modesty of her deportment, inspired favorable expectations of the future Queen. Henry, throughout the whole course of the transaction, appears to have been passive, and to have allowed his ministers to dispose of his hand, as of a thing in which he took little personal concern. The recollection of his first marriage with Margaret of Valois, so unproductive of domestic felicity; his confirmed habits of inconstancy and dissipation; together with the dread of perpetual altercations, if the wife destined for him, should prove of a violent or unaccommodating temper; — these natural reflections rendered him not merely indifferent, but even reluctant to enter anew upon the same state. Other embarrassments added weight to them: the Marchioness of Verneuil, who was pregnant, demanded with importunity the accomplishment of his promise, if she should produce him a son. On the other hand, the Florentine Princess was still at a distance from France; the nuptial solemnity remained incomplete, while not consummated; and it might yet

Situation of the King.

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vol. xiii. p. 445—449. Matt. vol. i. liv. iii. p. 535—562. Sully, vol. i. d. 441. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 177—181. Journal d'Henry IV., vol. i. p. 234—245. D'Aub. Hist. Univ. vol. iii. p. 471.

be

be considered in some measure doubtful, which of the two rivals would eventually ascend the throne [f]. The train of events which we denominate fortune, decided the contest. The Marchioness, terrified by the effects of a thunder-storm, having miscarried; an event at once so happy and so unexpected, while it liberated the King from his engagement to Henrietta, left him free to follow the wishes of his people. [g]

CHAP. VI. 1600.

May. Duke of Savoy refuses to accomplish the treaty.

On the arrival of the Duke of Savoy at Turin, it soon became evident that he had no intention of fulfilling the treaty lately concluded at Paris. When summoned by the French embassadors to execute it, and to make the option left him, he demanded a prolongation of the term; but his conduct sufficiently disclosed the insincerity of his views. Henry, not less determined to compel him by violence, if negotiation should prove ineffectual, advanced therefore to Lyons, with a view of approaching the scene of action, and of propelling by his presence, the tardiness of the ministers employed on either side. Apprehensive of the immediate commencement of hostilities, and desirous to protract, if he could not avert, so great a misfortune, Charles Emanuel had recourse to his usual artifices. A new treaty,

9th July.

[f] Journal d'Henry IV., vol. i. p. 245, 246. Matthieu, vol. i. liv. iii. p. 533, 534. De Thou, vol. xiii. p. 552, 553. Sully, vol. i. p. 436. Chron. Sept. p. 120, 121.

[g] Sully, vol. i. p. 442. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 185, 186. Amours d'Henry, IV., p. 61, 62.

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1600. Negotiations at Lyons. August. confirmatory and explanatory of the former agreement, was concluded at Lyons: but at the moment when in virtue of it, the King prepared to take possession of Saluzzo, the Duke throwing off the mask, declared that the most calamitous war would be preferable to the accomplishment of so ignominious, as well as ruinous a convention.

Hostilities. Hostilities instantly commenced on the part of France, which were prosecuted with equal vigor, celerity, and success.

13th Aug. While Biron, entering the province of Bresse, made himself master of the city of Bourg, almost without loss; Crequi, dispatched by Lesdiguieres, carried the town of Montmelian with similar rapidity. Chamberry, capital of the duchy of Savoy, attacked by Henry in person, capitulated in a few days.

23d Aug. Success of Henry. The fortress of Conflans, which defended the entrance of the Tarentaise, surrendered in like manner. Miolans opened its gates, and Charbonnieres, the key of the County of Maurienne, after a siege of fifteen days, followed the example.

19th Sept. Lesdiguieres at the same time, penetrating into that province, entered the capital, and subjected the whole country, quite to the foot of Mount Cenis. Of all the dominions subject to Savoy, west of the Alps, only the citadels of Montmelian and of Bourg, together with the fort of St. Catherine, situate in the vicinity of the city of Geneva, continued to make resistance. [h]

During

[h] De Thou, vol. xiii. p. 517—525. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 183—193. Guichenon, vol. i. p. 774, 775. Sully, vol. i. p. 443—450. Matthieu, vol. i. liv. iii. p. 570—584, and p. 587—592, and p. 598—460.

During these alarming events, which seemed to menace him with the fate of his ancestor Charles the Third, despoiled of his territories by Francis the First; the Duke of Savoy remained in a state of inaction at Turin. He did not even suspend the course of his ordinary pleasures or amusements: and though he made an effort to stop the torrent, by means of his agent Calatagirone, who had been instrumental towards producing the peace of Vervins, and whom he dispatched to Henry, with offers of accomplishing the treaty of Paris; yet he appeared totally insensible to the loss of his finest provinces, and regardless of the capture of his strongest fortresses. He relied in fact on a variety of secret springs, more effectual than arms, for his speedy extrication. The opposition of many individuals employed in the counsels, or cabinet of France; the effects of his treasonable correspondence and connexion with Biron; the approach of winter, in a mountainous country, covered with almost perpetual snow; and the powerful assistance of Philip the Third, King of Spain, who felt deeply interested in the preservation of Savoy, as well as in the exclusion of the French from Italy;—such were the auxiliaries on whose aid he reposed for assistance. In all these expectations, however apparently solid, he was nevertheless deceived by the result. The pusillanimity of the French ministers who opposed a rupture with Savoy, was over-

CHAP. VI.

1600.

Inactivity of the Duke of Savoy.

Causes of it.

—604. D'Aub. Hist. Gen. vol. iii. p. 471—476. Bassomp. vol. i. tome i. p. 48—51. Chron. Sept. p. 162—169.

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1600.

ruled by the King's vigor and determination; as the obstacles arising from the nature of the territory and climate, were anticipated by his rapidity. Biron, though he had entered into the most criminal intrigues with Charles Emanuel, as well as with the court of Spain, wanted means or ability to execute them; all his motions being watched with jealous circumspection.

His schemes are frustrated.

Conduct of the court of Madrid,

The cabinet of Madrid, which was destitute of energy, beheld with apparent indifference a contest, in which, at other periods of time, under Charles the Fifth, or Philip the Second, it would have interfered in the most decided manner. Philip the Third, unwarlike, indolent, and feeble, had already resigned the government to his minister, or rather, his favorite, the Duke of Lerma; who possessed neither the talents, nor the inclination, to venture on plunging his master into a war, at the commencement of his reign. In Flanders, the Spaniards having recently sustained a defeat near Nieuport, where Maurice, Prince of Orange, obtained a signal victory over the Arch-duke Albert, it became requisite to send supplies of troops to that quarter. Of all the great functionaries of the Spanish crown, the Count de Fuentes alone, governor of the Milanese, manifested a desire of marching to Charles Emanuel's assistance. Placed as he was at the head of a numerous army, in the immediate vicinity of the scene of hostilities, his implacable animosity towards the French King, impelled him to seize every occasion of invading

and of Fuentes.

ing his repose, or diminishing his power. But, Fuentes, fettered by the instructions of the cabinet of Spain, saw himself compelled to remain a reluctant spectator of the victories of his mortal enemy; and Europe began to perceive that with Philip the Second, that gigantic power which for near a century had overshadowed France, was rapidly sinking to decay.[i] CHAP. VI. 1600.

October. Capitulation of Montmelian.

The citadel of Montmelian appeared to oppose a more insurmountable barrier to Henry's further progress. Its situation on the summit of an insulated rock, the difficulty of approaching it, and still more the impracticability of bringing cannon to act against it with effect, when added to the strength of the works, seemed to set at defiance all his efforts. But, the presence of the King, the emulation excited between his officers, and the indefatigable exertions of Rosny, recently created master-general of the artillery, in addition to all his other employments, surmounted many of the impediments. The pusillanimity or treachery of the Governor, effected the rest. Unmindful of his own honor, of the importance of the charge confided to him, and of the fidelity due to his sovereign; he consented, after a short and feeble defence, to open a parley, in which it was stipulated that the fortress should surrender, if not succoured by the Duke within a month. Hostages being given for the execu- 16th Oct.

[i] De Thou, vol. xiii. p. 471—478. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 193, and p. 197—199. Matthieu, vol. i. liv. iii. p. 604, 605. Guichenon, vol. i. p. 776.

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tion of the articles, intimation of the conditions was conveyed to Charles Emanuel at Turin.[k]

1600. Alarm of the Holy See.

Justly alarmed at the rapidity of the French conquests, Clement the Eighth, who had so lately mediated a peace at Vervins, by which he had hoped to secure the lasting repose of Europe, began to manifest his apprehensions. Lombardy, which, during more than forty years had enjoyed a profound tranquillity, it was dreaded, might again become the theatre of war, as it had been under successive princes of the race of Valois. Henry, animated by the apparent facility of the enterprize, seconded by a warlike nobility, victorious troops, and all the resources of so powerful a monarchy as France, might speedily enter Piedmont, and subject the Milanese. Italy would thus be involved anew in the calamities which had desolated it during a great part of the sixteenth century; and the popes must be necessarily compelled to take a political, if not an active military part, in the dissentions between the contending powers. If Henry should extend his claims to Naples, even the Papal dominions could not be deemed secure from invasion. Rome might again be entered by Henry the Fourth, as it had been by Charles the Eighth; or might be sacked by some desperate chieftain, like the Constable of Bourbon, under the pontificate

[k] Chron. Sept. p. 169—174. Guichenon, vol. i. p. 776, 777. De Thou, vol. xiii. p. 525, 526, and p. 532, 533. Sully, vol. i. p. 450—453. Matthieu, vol. i. liv. iii. p. 612—616.

of

of Clement the Seventh. Stimulated by these considerations, to which were joined the entreaties of the Spanish embassador at the Court of Rome; Clement dispatched his nephew, Cardinal Aldobrandini, with instructions to conjure the King of France to suspend his attacks. The Legate having previously obtained from the Duke of Savoy and the Count de Fuentes, assurances that they would acquiesce in, and faithfully execute the treaty of Paris; proceeded to Chamberry, where the King gave him audience. But, though Henry protested his desire of peace, and his disposition to maintain the articles agreed on at Vervins; he nevertheless refused to listen to any suspension of arms in the actual position of affairs, before the final surrender of Montmelian. That fortress, anticipating the term fixed for admitting the French, opened its gates; and the Governor, by retiring into France, sufficiently betrayed the disgraceful motives which had accelerated its evacuation.[1]

CHAP. VI.

1600.

Clement the Eighth interposes.

14th Nov. Surrender of Montmelian.

Charles Emanuel, roused at length from his inactivity by so many reverses, and deceived in his expectations of support, either from Biron's defection, or from the interference of Spain as a party in the war; prepared to make an effort for the preservation of his remaining dominions. He advanced for the purpose, into the province

Charles Emanuel takes the field.

12th Nov.

[1] Guichenon, vol. i. p. 777, 778. Matthieu, vol. i. liv. iii. p. 621—625, and p. 633—645, and p. 651. Sully, vol. i. p. 454.

CHAP. VI.

1600.

Operations in Savoy.

of Aoste, at the head of more than ten thousand infantry, and five thousand cavalry, as if with intention to give battle to the enemy. Henry manifested equal impatience to decide the contest by an action. But, though the two armies were encamped almost in sight of each other, being only separated by an intervening mountain; yet, such was the rugged nature of the country, the severity of the weather, and the quantity of snow which fell, as to render fruitless all his efforts for the purpose. Quitting therefore the camp, he repaired in person to the siege of Fort St. Catherine. This fortress, constructed at a vast expence, within two leagues of the city of Geneva, which place it was intended to bridle; might still, in so advanced a season, have retarded the French arms before it during a considerable time. Unfortunately for the Duke of Savoy, the Governor, imitating the example of Montmelian, preferred capitulating, rather than defending the fort. He obtained from the King, ample and favorable conditions. Amidst so many instances of treachery, or of cowardice, Bouvens, who commanded in the citadel of Bourg, magnanimously refused to listen to any terms, however advantageous. In defiance of the pressure of famine, and though destitute of any hope of relief, he could neither be intimidated by the menaces, nor corrupted by the offers of the besiegers: and if the improvidence of Charles Emanuel, had not left him in want of provisions, he would have finally repulsed every attempt on the

6th Dec. Fort St. Catherine surrenders.

the part of the French, to render themselves masters of the place. [m] CHAP. VI.

1600.

After the reduction of Fort St. Catherine, Henry could no longer delay the consummation of his nuptials with Mary of Medicis, who waited at Lyons with impatience, for his arrival. Embarking therefore on the Rhone, he descended that river with the utmost expedition. The solemnity of the princess's marriage had been performed more than two months preceding, at Florence, by procuration, with extreme magnificence; the Cardinal Legate Aldobrandini officiating on the occasion. Escorted by the Papal, Maltese, and Tuscan gallies, from Leghorn, accompanied with a splendid retinue, she coasted the Genoese territories; and after a stormy passage, entered the port of Marseilles. Sixty-seven years had elapsed since Catherine of Medicis, conducted by Pope Clement the Seventh with similar pomp, had arrived in the same city, to espouse Henry, Duke of Orleans, afterwards Henry the Second. Mary was received by the Constable Montmorency, the Chancellor, and many of the first nobility, whom Henry had dispatched to welcome her on landing in France. Proceeding to Lyons, she made her public entry into the city, amidst the acclamations of the people; who regarded her union with the

Arrival of Mary of Medicis, at Lyons.

3d Nov.

3d Dec.

[m] D'Aub. Hist. Univ. vol. iii. p. 476—479. De Thou, vol. xiii, p. 537—541. Guichenon, vol. i. p. 778. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 197. Matthieu, vol. i. liv. iii. p. 653—659, and p. 660—663. Bassomp. vol. i. tom. i. p. 52—54. Sully, vol. i. p. 456, 457. Chron. Sept. p. 174, 175.

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1600. King, as at once the seal of his felicity, and the confirmation of the national repose, by the prospect which it afforded of giving heirs to the throne. Henry himself arrived soon afterwards from Savoy, in the equipage and habit of a soldier. Without waiting for a renewal of the nuptial benediction, he proceeded immediately to consummate his marriage; though the public ceremony of his nuptials was again repeated on the following day, followed by all the exhibitions of splendor or gaiety, suitable to so auspicious an occasion. [n]

9th Dec. Henry celebrates his marriage.

Negotiation for peace, renewed. The negotiation for a peace, which the King had declined to enter on at Chamberry, was revived with more efficacy at Lyons, by the intervention of the Legate Aldobrandini, in conjunction with the embassadors of Savoy. As the French ministers demanded a considerable sum, by way of compensation for the expences occasioned by the war; the province of Bugey, together with the district of Valromey, were offered by Charles Emanuel: who, in exchange for some dependencies of Provence contiguous to the Marquisate of Saluzzo, which he desired to retain, added likewise the territory or Bailiwick of Gex, situate in the vicinity of the lake of Geneva. In consideration of these important cessions to France, together with the original stipulation of Bresse, as settled at Paris; Henry consented to restore all his conquests, without

Terms offered.

[n] Journal d'Henry IV., vol. i. p. 270—272. De Thou, vol. xiii. p. 552—561. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 202, 203. Sully, vol. i. p. 457. D'Aub. Hist. Gen. vol. iii. p. 479—481. Matthieu, vol. i. liv. iii. p. 666—679. Chron. Sept. p. 181—191.

dis-

dismantling any of the fortresses; abandoning at the same time to the Duke the possession of Saluzzo, the primary cause of the rupture. But, at the moment when all the preliminaries appeared to be adjusted, a new obstacle arose to retard their accomplishment. In compliance with the solicitation of the inhabitants of Geneva, a private commission had been issued for the purpose of destroying the fortifications of Fort St. Catherine; and as the execution of the order was entrusted to Rosny, a Hugonot, he lost not an instant in demolishing so obnoxious a citadel. Mines having been sprung for the purpose, it was completely reduced to a heap of ruins; and even the materials composing it were carried off by the Genevese, anxious to leave no vestige of its existence.

Fort St. Catherine, demolished.

When the intelligence of this destruction was conveyed to the Legate, he expressed the utmost indignation at an act, which he not only affected to consider as an infraction of the principles of the treaty, but as an indirect insult to the Holy See itself; Geneva, the center and asylum of heresy, being by the demolition of Fort St. Catherine, emancipated from its greatest object of apprehension. The conferences were nevertheless resumed after some days, at the entreaty of the Savoyard ministers; who, terrified lest the citadel of Bourg should be compelled by famine to capitulate, besought of the Legate to terminate the business. He complied; when to his astonishment and concern, the Duke's embassadors produced an order of their Sovereign, prohibiting

1601. January. Conferences resumed.

ing

CHAP. VI.

1601. 17th Jan. Conclusion of peace.

ing them from signing without further directions. Vanquished, at length, by Aldobrandini's entreaties, menaces, and assurances of responsibility, they however affixed their signatures, under the express condition, that the term of a month should be allowed to their master, in which time he was bound to send his ratification. °

Duke of Savoy refuses to ratify the treaty.

Henry conceiving the war ended by this agreement, quitted Lyons immediately, leaving the Queen to follow him to the capital, by slower journies. But, Charles Emanuel, and the Count de Fuentes, far from acquiescing in a treaty which they regarded as no less dishonorable than ruinous, determined to recur anew to hostilities. The Duke had not altogether renounced his hopes of assistance from Biron; nor was it, as he supposed, improbable, that Philip the Third, might yet be induced to enter the lists, and espouse his quarrel. Bouvens still held out in the citadel of Bourg, and Fuentes acted in perfect concert with the court of Turin. But all these expectations were speedily extinguished by the Duke of Lerma. That minister, anxious to preserve peace with France, while Spain was engaged in prosecuting war against the Dutch; and seeing the security of the Milanese amply guaranteed by the exclusion of the French from Italy; demonstrated

February.

° Guichenon, vol. i. p. 779—782. De Thou, vol. xiii. p. 561—568. Matthieu, vol. ii. liv. iv. p. 1—31. D'Aub. Hist. Gen. vol. iii. p. 481—486. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 203—207. Sully, vol. i. p. 458—460. Chron. Sept. p. 204—211.

little

1601.

little concern for the losses, or sensibility to the misfortunes, of his master's nearest ally. Biron, however desirous, found himself unable to carry into execution, his criminal purposes. The Legate loudly demanded the accomplishment of a negotiation, in which were deeply interested his own honor, and the dignity of the Holy See. The citadel of Bourg, reduced to extremities, was on the point of surrendering; and Fuentes, restrained by the peremptory orders of his court from interference, could extend no protection. Under these distressful circumstances, the Duke, after exhausting every subterfuge, and protracting to the last moment his consent, reluctantly ratified the treaty. The articles were executed on both sides, with becoming fidelity. [p]

Causes, which compelled him to acquiesce in it.

9th March.

If we consider its effects in a political point of view, we must admit them to have been equally glorious and beneficial to France. Henry not only augmented the lustre of his arms, and the splendor of his reputation, but he acquired a vast and valuable encrease of territory. The two provinces of Bresse and Bugey, extending near thirty leagues in length, covered and protected the city of Lyons, which antecedently was liable to perpetual insult or attack on the part of the Dukes of Savoy, from the vicinity of Bourg. Dauphiné and Burgundy derived similar advantages from the

Effects of the treaty.

Beneficial to France,

[p] Guichenon, vol. i. p. 782—784. De Thou, vol. xiii. p. 568—572. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 207—210. Matthieu, vol. ii. liv. iv. p. 31—39. Chron. Sept. p. 211, 212.

acqui-

CHAP. VI. 1601.

acquisition. The King became master of the Rhone, from its passage out of the Lake of Geneva, down to its confluence with the Saone: he facilitated his communication with Germany and Switzerland; straitened the County of Burgundy, which was possessed by Spain; and rendered himself in effect, as well as in name, the protector of the Republic of Geneva. So important an accession of dominion had not been made during the lapse of near half a century, since the seizure of Metz, Toul, and Verdun, by Henry the Second; and the countries ceded by the Duke, have remained down to the present time, irrevocably annexed to France. If it must on the other hand be admitted, that Henry resigned the only entrance left him, whereby his armies could penetrate into Italy; yet, when we reflect on the unhappy termination of the numerous attempts made under the Princes of Valois, to subject the Milanese and Naples, that very renunciation might be esteemed a wise and salutary measure. Charles Emanuel on his part, though vanquished in the field, betrayed by his governors, and abandoned in the contest by Spain, nevertheless retained the original subject of the war. Nor must we estimate the value of the Marquisate of Saluzzo, by its magnitude, its population, or its revenue. Its local situation in the neighbourhood of Turin, the access which its possession opened to Piedmont, and the facility which it lent the French to invade Italy;—these circumstances compensated, if they did not overpay the cession of a much

but honorable to Savoy.

much more extensive tract of country. Some degree of honor was supposed to accrue even from a contest, however unfortunate it had proved, maintained by him against a power so much superior in strength; and Lesdiguieres sarcastically asserted, that "the King had "negotiated with the interested spirit of a "merchant, while the Duke manifested the "elevated views of a Prince." [q]

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From this period down to the close of Henry's reign, comprizing the space of more than nine years, France presents an almost uninterrupted scene of uniform serenity and prosperity. By a singular and rapid transition, of which history offers few examples; a kingdom, desolated during near half a century by domestic or foreign commotions, passed to the opposite extreme of repose: and it may be justly questioned whether the Roman world under Antoninus Pius, enjoyed a more auspicious calm, or a more unchequered felicity, than the French people tasted under Henry the Fourth. The transient clouds which arose on the political horizon, were almost instantly dispersed by his wisdom, or dissipated by his vigilance. All the remainder of his life was passed amidst the diversions of a magnificent court, in the cultivation of the arts, the improvement of the revenue, the pursuits of gallantry, and however incompatible they may appear, the practices of devotion. After the reception of

Commencement of a period of tranquillity.

March.

[q] Guichenon, vol. i. p. 784, 785. Matthieu, vol. ii. liv. iv. p. 39—41. Chron. Sept. p. 212, 213.

the

CHAP. VI.

1601.

Henry visits Calais.

the Queen at Paris, Henry accompanied her on a pious excursion to Orleans, at which place were to be obtained the indulgencies, granted by the Holy See to pilgrims in the year of Jubilee. Advancing from thence to Calais, attended by a numerous train, his presence on that frontier, diffused the utmost terror throughout the Netherlands. The Arch-duke Albert, occupied in the long and uncertain siege of Ostend; conscious that the court of Madrid had given the King some recent subjects of complaint, and apprehensive that he might extend assistance to the Dutch; dispatched a nobleman of his court, for the purpose of complimenting the French monarch. But, Henry's views and attention were directed towards England. Elizabeth, desirous of having an interview with a Prince whose great actions had justly rendered him an object of admiration to all Europe, repaired to Dover, with a view of facilitating the desired conference. Motives either of caution, or of policy, not well ascertained, nevertheless frustrated their mutual inclination; and induced the King to dispatch Rosny, his confidential minister, in order to discover the Queen's secret intentions relative to their common enemies of the house of Austria. He fulfilled the commission entrusted to him, carrying back to his master the most positive assurances of her unalterable hostility to Spain; accompanied by her desire to form a treaty with the crown of France, for the purpose of attacking Philip the Third in every quarter of his

He sends Rosny to Elizabeth.

his dominions[r]. We are tempted to regret that two sovereigns so illustrious as Henry and Elizabeth, should never have seen each other. CHAP. VI. 1601.

Desirous of displaying his respect towards so faithful an ally, who had sustained him during the most distressful periods of his reign, Henry sent over Biron, at the head of a a splendid embassy, to the court of London. Elizabeth received him with all the testimonies of personal consideration, due to a man whose valor had made him deservedly dear to his sovereign, and who had rendered the most essential services to the state. The recent execution of the unfortunate Devereux, Earl of Essex, who had enjoyed a distinguished place in the Queen's affection, and who had recently expiated his rebellion by an ignominious death; might nevertheless have instructed Biron in the fatal consequences, which must sooner or later result from his criminal connexion with the enemies of France, if he had been capable of profiting by example. But, his presumptuous confidence in his own merit, together with his implacable resentment of the supposed indignities which he had received from the King, induced him to continue his treasonable practices with the Duke of Savoy and the Count de Fuentes. Neither the admonitions, the caresses, nor the benefits of Henry, could alter Embassy of Biron to England.

[r] Sully, vol. i. tome ii. p. 11—15. De Thou, vol. xiii. p. 573, and p. 610. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 214—218. Matthieu, vol. ii. liv. iv. p. 92, 93.

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his determination, nor avert his impending destruction.[s]

1601. Birth of the Dauphin. 27th Sept.

The pregnancy of the Queen of France had been long announced to the nation; and the King, in common with all his subjects, expected with the utmost impatience, the event. Mary of Medicis, after a long and painful labour, gratified the anxious hopes of the country, by giving birth to a son, who afterwards ascended the throne under the name of Louis the Thirteenth. She could not then foresee that he would allow her to expire in exile, poverty, and every accumulating calamity of age aggravated by disease, on the banks of the Rhine, far removed from the Arno or from the Seine. The French people who, during more than forty years, ever since the death of Henry the Second, had not beheld a lineal successor to the crown; exhibited the warmest proofs of loyalty and affection, on so joyful an occasion. While the King himself appeared to be overcome with emotions of gratitude to Heaven, blended with lively satisfaction, at beholding a Dauphin. His birth confirmed the general felicity, strengthened the government, suppressed the pretensions of the princes of the blood, and extinguished the expectations of the seditious or the disaffected, throughout every part of the monarchy.[t]

[s] Matthieu, vol. ii. liv. iv. p. 93—105. De Thou, vol. xiii. p. 611, 612. Journal d'Henry IV., vol. i. p. 286—289.

[t] De Thou, vol. xiii. p. 649, 650. Journal d'Henry IV., vol. i. 284, 285. Matthieu, vol. ii. liv. iv. p. 105—108. Sully, vol. i. tome ii. p. 22.

Liber-

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1601.

Liberated from foreign enemies, Henry had leisure to inspect the internal state of his dominions, to ascertain its political diseases, and to apply the necessary remedies. Not less vigilant and active in time of peace, than he had shewn himself intrepid when menaced by external invasion; his views embraced every object calculated to promote, or to augment, the national prosperity. The number of persons employed in the collection of the revenue, was diminished; and some attempt was made to bring to justice those individuals, who during the past commotions, availing themselves of the general distress, had amassed enormous wealth, by every species of rapine and peculation. A tribunal was instituted for enquiring into, and trying the offenders: but such was their power or interest, that they found means to elude the pursuit; and though the experiment was renewed, it never produced any beneficial consequences. Sumptuary laws were enacted, and rigorously enforced; while measures were taken to prevent the exportation of gold and silver, in which articles a very pernicious traffic was carried on with the surrounding countries. The use and currency of foreign coin, which was circulated in payments and commercial transactions, at a higher value than the money of France, was interdicted; and notwithstanding the immediate inconveniences or losses occasioned by the prohibition, they were compensated by its eventual benefits. Usury, which, like other abuses, had grown up to a destructive

Internal regulations, of various kinds.

CHAP. VI. 1601.

tive height, was repressed; the rate of legal interest being limited to six and one quarter per cent. [u]

Foreign affairs.

These internal regulations did not diminish the King's attention to objects of more enlarged or distant policy, beyond the frontiers of France. It had become of the highest importance, to renew the alliance with the Swiss Cantons; whose troops, subsidized by every sovereign since Louis the Eleventh, by their intrepidity and fidelity, had on various occasions augmented the glory, and even preserved the existence of the monarchy. Such is the analogy between France at the beginning of the nineteenth, and of the seventeenth century, that we see Louis the Eighteenth, like Henry the Fourth, extending his earliest cares to a revival of the antient stipendiary connexions between the most Christian Kings and the Helvetic Confederacy, in virtue of which the French throne is guarded by their valor and loyalty. During the period of anarchy that succeeded the death of Henry the Third, the Spanish governors of the Milanese, availing themselves of the bigotted adherence of the five smaller Cantons to the Catholic religion, had induced them to contract subsidiary engagements with the Court of Madrid. Even the remaining members of the Helvetic union being no longer retained by the powerful operation of regular and con-

[u] Matthieu, vol. ii. liv. iv. p. 135—143. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 223—226. Sully, vol. i. tome ii. p. 19—23.

stant pecuniary supplies, which the poverty of the crown rendered Henry unable to remit, had relaxed in their adherence to the French sovereign and nation. Patience, perseverance, and insinuation, supported by an ample remittance of money in discharge of arrears, were become necessary to obliterate the impression made by the agents of Philip the Third, and for recalling the Switzers to their antient connexions with France. They betrayed much irresolution in the different Diets which were convoked, and long denied or refused to accede to a new treaty, by which they should be bound to furnish regular bodies of troops. But, the address of Henry's ministers having at length surmounted every impediment, the arrival of Biron at Soleurre, completed the work. His high military reputation, and acknowledged valor; the attachment felt for the memory of his father Marshal Biron, who had always expressed a peculiar affection for the Switzers; when added to the personal merit and exertions of his son, cemented the alliance. It was renewed, not only for the King's own life, but likewise for that of the Dauphin. We must confess that if it was the last, it could not be ranked among the least of the numerous services, rendered by Biron to the crown. [x]

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1601. State of the Swiss Cantons.

1602. January. Alliance renewed with them.

Notwithstanding the apparent tranquillity of the kingdom, Henry received continually the most alarming intimations, respecting seditious

Commotions in the provinces.

[x] Matthieu, vol. ii. liv. iv. p. 166—185. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 229—231. De Thou, vol. xiv. p. 106—108.

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designs or machinations meditated against the government. The interior provinces along the course of the Loire, as well as those on the banks of the Garonne, even manifested symptoms approaching to revolt. At Limoges and at Rochelle, the inhabitants, irritated at the continuance of some severe and unpopular taxes, which had been imposed during the war carried on against Spain, resisted by force the officers appointed to levy them in the King's name. It was apprehended, not without reason, that the concealed agents of Philip the Third, and the emissaries of the Duke of Savoy, fomented these discontents, which seemed to menace a civil war. Biron, though the most illustrious and desperate conspirator, was by no means the only man of rank engaged in criminal projects. Numbers of the discontented Hugonots, alienated from Henry since his abjuration, and inflamed by violent or artful men, sought for foreign protection. They even meditated to erect a commonwealth in France, of which republic, the Queen of England, or some of the Calvinist German princes, might be constituted protector.

Discontent of the Hugonots,

Henry de la Tour d'Auvergne, whom the King's partiality and friendship had raised from the comparatively private rank of Viscount Turenne, to the independant sovereignty of the duchy of Bouillon, repaid his benefactor with the same ingratitude as Biron. Not inferior to that nobleman in personal courage, he far exceeded Biron in capacity, caution, and solidity of

and of the Duke of Bouillon.

of judgment. Attached to the reformed religion, he possessed no small influence in the counsels and deliberations of the Protestants. He was supported by the Duke de la Tremouille, another of the great Hugonot leaders, and the court itself abounded with malcontents. Epernon, reduced since the death of Henry the Third, to a comparative state of political insignificance, was secretly disposed to aid an insurrection; though he possessed too much circumspection, to risk the loss of his dignities, possessions, and life, by entering into any positive engagements with so disunited a party. Charles of Valois, Count of Auvergne, natural son of Charles the Ninth by Mary Touchet, uterine brother to the Marchioness of Verneuil, was likewise one of the accomplices. His ferocity, duplicity, and perfidy, qualities which he seemed to inherit from his father, rendered him more dangerous to his friends than to his enemies; his love of life prompting him on all occasions, to betray the counsels in which he had precipitately engaged from levity or vengeance. [y]

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Epernon.

Count of Auvergne.

Roused by the reiterated advices of an approaching and imminent insurrection, Henry instantly repaired to the scene of danger. After visiting Blois and Tours on his way, he advanced to the city of Poitiers, while he dispatched his minister Rosny to the port of Ro-

May.

June. Henry repairs to Poitiers.

[y] Sully, vol. i. tome ii. p. 44, 45. Matthieu, vol. ii. liv. v. p. 237, 238. De Thou, vol. xiv. p. 61—62.

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chelle. The King's presence, vigilance, and exertions speedily dissipating the storm, restored submission: but the apprehension of new and similar evils arising in other quarters of his dominions, determined him, however repugnant to his natural disposition, no longer to delay recurring to the strongest remedies, for the eradication of so inveterate a distemper. Conscious that lenity and clemency proved unequal to reclaiming minds, accustomed to consider treason as scarcely constituting a crime; and aware that only some signal example of severity could impose restraints on a turbulent and factious nobility, habituated to the licentiousness of civil war; he resolved to begin with Biron. The treachery of La Fin, a Burgundian gentleman, who carried on his negotiations at Turin and at Milan, with the Duke of Savoy and Fuentes; had already put the King in possession of all the evidence requisite to prove Biron's guilt in the most satisfactory manner. This man, ruined in his fortune, destitute of virtue or principle, and offended that Biron no longer treated him with the same confidence as formerly, had retired to his own estate. Terrified at the idea of being seized and punished as a traitor, he was easily induced by an assurance of pardon and protection, to repair to court; where, in the course of several private interviews with Henry and his ministers, he revealed every circumstance respecting the conspiracy. Even the papers and documents written by Biron, which that infatuated noble-

La Fin reveals the practices of Biron.

nobleman conceived that La Fin had destroyed in consequence of his orders, were presented to the King. He was confirmed in his fatal security on so material a point, by the protestations of his faithless agent, who acquainted him, that in the various conferences and examinations which he underwent, no circumstances had transpired tending to criminate Biron. Deluded by these false declarations, confiding in the honor of La Fin, pressed by Henry to visit Paris, upon matters of public concern; and incapable of resisting by force, if, as it was natural to expect, the King, irritated at his delay, should march into Burgundy; Biron at length reluctantly quitted Dijon, and arrived at Fontainbleau. [z]

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Biron arrives at court.

Henry received him with testimonies of regard, notwithstanding his cold and arrogant deportment; beseeching him in repeated conversations, to confess his treasonable practices; assuring him at the same time of pardon and oblivion, if he would merit it by a candid disclosure of his fault. But, such was his credulous reliance on the secrecy of La Fin, and so intoxicated was he with the value of his own past services rendered to the crown, that he persisted inflexibly to deny the charges or suspicions entertained by the King. It was not till after a long and severe conflict with himself, when he had ineffectually exhausted every

13th June. His reception.

[z] Matthieu, vol. ii. liv. v. p. 256—264. De Thou, vol. xiv. p. 65, 66. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 231, 232, and p. 235—239. Bassomp. vol. i. tome i. p. 57. Chron. Sept. p. 285—289.

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means to soften or reclaim Biron, that Henry issued orders to arrest a man, whose valor had been so instrumental to placing him on the throne. Biron, unprepared for such a blow, was seized as he quitted the royal presence, disarmed, and soon afterwards transferred with every requisite precaution to Paris; where Rosny, Governor of the Bastile, received the prisoner into his immediate care. At the time that Vitry arrested Biron, the Count of Auvergne being in a similar manner put into confinement, was conveyed to prison.[a]

He is arrested. 15th June.

His trial.

The trial of Biron, which took place almost immediately afterwards, before the supreme court of criminal judicature, the parliament of Paris; was conducted with the utmost solemnity, and with all possible attention to the dignity of the prisoner. His guilt was established by every species of evidence; the voluntary confession of the person accused; the depositions of La Fin and of Renazé, another accomplice; lastly, by the production of the culprit's letters written with his own hand. In extenuation, if not in exculpation of these charges, Biron urged, that however culpable his intentions might have been, they had never passed the limits of his mind, and had not proceeded to actions. He pleaded the pardon which Henry had granted him at Lyons, soon after the termination of the war with Savoy; when, actuated by remorse, he had confessed his criminal connexions

Defence.

[a] Sully, vol. i. tom. ii. p. 48—50. Matthieu, vol. ii. liv. v. p. 262—282. De Thou, vol. xiv. p. 66—68. Chron. Sept. p. 289—292.

with

with the enemies of the state; and he denied his having renewed them subsequent to that event. The testimonies of La Fin and Renazé, he attempted to invalidate; opposing to his single fault, a whole life passed in the service of the crown, his father's loyalty and merits, his own body covered with honorable scars or wounds. With loud and violent imprecations, he repelled the accusation of having ever meditated any design against the King's life; throwing himself on the clemency of a prince, who was not only distinguished by that virtue, but who, in the course of his reign, had frequently extended his forgiveness to criminals of a far more heinous description than himself. The tribunal nevertheless unanimously adjudged him to lose his head on a scaffold, in the "Place de Greve;" declared his peerage attainted, and his possessions confiscated to the crown.[b]

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Condemnation.

A sentence which, however just in itself, yet appeared to partake of severity, might still have been commuted or alleviated by the King: but Henry on this single occasion throughout his whole life, seems to have been insensible or inaccessible to the emotions of compassion. He rejected every supplication made in Biron's behalf, and confirmed the decree of the parliament, only changing the scene of execution, to the court of the Bastile. Even in this alteration, policy had probably a greater share than lenity,

Severity of the King.

[b] Journal d'Henry IV., vol. iv. p. 187—190. Matthieu, vol. ii. liv. v. p. 285—329. De Thou, vol. xiv. p. 72—91. Chron. Sept. p. 292—307.

as

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as the prisoner was adored by the soldiery whom he had so often conducted to victory; and the public spectacle of his death, in the midst of a populous and tumultuous capital, might have proved highly dangerous to the public tranquillity. In the interval which elapsed between his condemnation and his punishment, but still more at the time of his execution, he betrayed all the disordered transports of a furious, vindictive, and irritated mind; passing with rapid transitions, from penitence and sorrow, to menaces, complaints, and every expression of rage against his accusers. Such was the violence of his despair, and the well-known intrepidity of his character, that he impressed with terror his judges, the spectators, and the executioner himself. It became necessary to sooth, or to gratify him in some particulars, in order to dispose and induce him to submit quietly to the sentence of the law. Even at the instant when his head was about to be severed from his body, he lost neither his presence of mind, nor any portion of his natural ferocity. Threatening to strangle with his own hands, the executioner who should presume to approach or to touch him while he was yet alive; the blow which finally terminated his existence, was anticipated by the dexterity of the minister of justice.[c]

Behaviour of Biron.

31st July. His execution.

[c] Journal d'Henry IV., vol. i. p. 192—169. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 248—250. Matthieu, vol. ii. liv. v. p. 329—359. De Thou, vol. xiv. p. 91—94. D'Aub. Hist. Gen. vol. iii. p. 492—496. Sully, vol. i. tome ii. p. 50, 51. Chron. Septenn. p. 308—315.

The

1602.

Reflexions on the crime, and punishment of Biron.

The people in general, and even many persons of incontestable loyalty among the higher orders, manifested their regret at the unhappy conclusion of a life, which, however forfeited by treason, had nevertheless been distinguished in its course by the most brilliant services. They lamented that the first monarch in Europe, possessed of the affection of his subjects, victorious over foreign enemies, in the midst of profound peace, should yet deem his life and crown insecure, unless cemented by the blood of Biron. They thought that a less rigorous punishment might have proved equally effectual; and that he might without hazard, have either received a pardon, or at least have expiated his offences by imprisonment. If it seems difficult to blame the King's severity, it is equally impossible not to admit, that he would have appeared more amiable as well as more exalted in pardoning, than in condemning his unfortunate and culpable subject. But, Biron had rendered himself personally odious and obnoxious to his sovereign. The crimes of Bouillon, of Epernon, and of Mayenne, all which were political, admitted of forgiveness. The arrogance of Biron had wounded, while his obdurate pertinacity had irritated, an indulgent master. Henry dreaded the vengeance of a haughty and implacable spirit: he knew the extent of Biron's treasonable practices with Spain and Savoy, as well as his ambition to ascend above the condition of a subject: he looked forward with natural and wise solicitude, to

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to the possible event of his own death, and the disorders incident to a minority. When these considerations of a public nature, were added to his private causes of resentment, he no longer hesitated to sacrifice one guilty individual, to the safety of his family, and the tranquillity of France. [d]

[d] De Thou, vol. xiv. p. 93, 94. Journal d'Henry IV., p. 199—201. Chron. Sept. p. 317—322.

CHAP. VII.

Submission of France to Henry. — Duke of Bouillon quits the kingdom. — Attempt of the Duke of Savoy, on Geneva. — Death of Elizabeth. — Embassy of Rosny, to James the First. — Treaty between France and England. — Domestic events and quarrels. — Internal fermentation, and political intrigues. — Policy and conduct of the court of Madrid. — Conspiracy of the Marchioness of Verneuil. — Arrest of the principal conspirators. — Surrender of Ostend. — Affairs of Germany. — Trial of the Count of Auvergne, and his accomplices. — Henry pardons them. — Foreign transactions. — Journey of the King to Limoges. — Conspiracy of Merargues. — Preparations of Henry for war. — State of the cabinet. — March of the King to Sedan. — Submission and pardon of Bouillon. — Tranquillity of France.

CHAP. VII.

1602. August.

THE example of severity exhibited by the King, in the seizure and execution of Biron, whatever comments it might excite; became productive of the most salutary and beneficial effects, during the remainder of his reign. It instructed the French nobility, who had long been accustomed to regard connexions with foreign princes, as neither criminal nor dangerous; that no rank, nor services however eminent, could protect them from the punishment due to treason. Even beyond the limits of France, the death of so illustrious a culprit, inspired caution, if not terror, by imposing

Effect of the late severity.

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posing a restraint on the machinations of the courts of Turin and Madrid. The embassadors of Philip, and of Charles Emanuel, who joined in the general congratulations to Henry, on the discovery of so alarming a conspiracy; were eager to disown, in the names of their respective princes, all participation in the guilt of Biron. Fontenelles, a gentleman of Britanny, convicted of a design to deliver up to the Spaniards, a port and island belonging to that province, situate in the vicinity of Brest; was put to death at Paris, with every circumstance of ignominy. Towards all the other individuals involved in the late criminal projects, Henry extended his accustomed clemency. The Baron de Lux, a gentleman who had succeeded to La Fin in the confidence of Biron, and who alone possessed the secret of his last negotiations with the Duke of Savoy and Fuentes; experienced in its full extent, the generosity of the King. Having repaired to court on the assurances of safety given him, and made an ingenuous disclosure of every circumstance respecting his past conduct; he received not only a pardon, but the confirmation in his post of lieutenant-governor of Burgundy. The Count of Auvergne, equally criminal, but more fortunate than Biron, being liberated from the Bastile after a short confinement, was reinstated in his preceding favor. He owed so signal a display of lenity, not less to the tears of his sister, the Marchioness of Verneuil, than to his paternal descent from the house of Valois,

Execution of Fontenelles.

27th Sept.

Henry pardons Auvergne.

2d Oct.

lois, which excited respect in the royal bosom. The Prince of Joinville, brother to the Duke of Guise, who had been convicted of carrying on some treasonable or dangerous intelligence with the emissaries of Spain, was treated with similar indulgence. Lavardin being dispatched for the purpose by Henry, took possession of the castles of Dijon and of Beaune, which had been held by Biron, without experiencing any resistance; and tranquillity appeared to revive in every part of the kingdom. [a]

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Submission of Burgundy.

The Duke of Bouillon alone, more terrified at Biron's fate, than encouraged by any instances of lenity and mercy shewn towards others; refused to entrust himself to the honor, or to throw himself on the friendship and affection of the King. Neither entreaties, expostulations, nor menaces, could alter his resolution. Retiring into the central province of the Limousin, he offered to submit his cause to the judgment of the tribunal of the city of Castres, which was composed of Catholics and Protestants in equal numbers: but that court declining to interfere in an affair which exceeded the powers of its jurisdiction; Bouillon, apprehensive of being arrested, quitted France, and took refuge at Geneva. He even ventured to publish an apology, or more properly a Manifesto, justificatory of his innocence, and conceived in terms little calculated to mollify the

Conduct of Bouillon.

November. He quits the kingdom.

[a] Chron. Sept. p. 324. Matthieu, vol. ii. liv. v. p. 361—373. De Thou, vol. xiv. p. 94—96, and p. 105. Sully, vol. i. tome ii. p. 53, and p. 73—76. Journal d'Henry IV., vol. i. p. 202, 203, and p. 204, 205.

resent-

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1602.

resentment of Henry. It was powerfully sustained by the intercession of the Hugonots, and even by the applications of foreign princes in his favor. Elizabeth, either convinced of his innocence, or desirous in his person to display her attachment towards the party in which he occupied so distinguished a place, addressed a letter to the King in his behalf. The example of the Queen of England, was imitated by the Elector Palatine: but Henry remaining inflexible, exacted the personal submission of Bouillon, previous to extending any act of grace or of oblivion on the part of the crown.[b]

Intercession, in his favor.

14th Oct. Swiss embassadors arrive at Paris.

The gloom, which had overspread the capital in consequence of the late executions, was dissipated by the arrival of the embassadors deputed by the thirteen Cantons, to swear in the name of the Helvetic union, to the observance of the treaties recently concluded with France. The King, on an occasion so solemn and so happy, displayed at once the utmost cordiality and magnificence, in his treatment of the deputies. After having been regaled by the ministers, the princes of the blood, and the magistrates, during their stay at Paris, they were dismissed with marks of royal and national bounty. In the final accomplishment of an alliance which attached Switzerland to France by the closest bonds of political union, and which gave new security to the throne; the as-

[b] Hist. de Bouillon, vol. ii. p. 221—265. De Thou, vol. xiv. p. 96—105, and p. 138—140. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 253, 254. Matthieu, vol. ii. liv. v. p. 371. Sully, vol. i. p. 51. Chron. Sept. p. 324—326.

cendancy

cendancy and wisdom of Henry's counsels were not less manifested, than the vigor of his arms had been exerted during the short contest with Savoy. The feeble efforts, or timid acquiescence of the court of Madrid, while so formidable a rival was annually acquiring force, amassing treasures, and extending his influence over Europe; accused the indolence, or incapacity of the Duke of Lerma, first minister of Philip the Third. It was become already apparent that the Spanish monarchy, badly administered in the interior, impoverished and exhausted by wars of ambition; could no longer make those military efforts, or equip those fleets, which under Philip the Second, had justly alarmed or intimidated every surrounding state.

1602. Able policy of Henry. State of Spain,

Nor could the Catholic King derive any assistance from the German branch of the house of Austria, which power, in the person of Rodolph the Second, had insensibly lost all consideration or respect. Albert and Isabella, who governed the Low Countries; occupied in the long and uncertain siege of Ostend, incapable of paying the numerous troops required to maintain hostilities against the Dutch, and opposed by the most active general of his age, Maurice, Prince of Orange; found themselves wholly unable to make any exertions beyond the limits of the Netherlands. The adherence of Charles Emanuel to Spain, notwithstanding the tyes of marriage which connected him with that crown, was precarious; and Henry always possessed the means to regain his friendship, or procure his

of Flanders, and of Savoy.

CHAP. VII. 1602.

aid, by tempting his ambition. The balance of power, which during more than a century, had inclined to the Spanish branch of Austria, began, though insensibly, to preponderate in favor of France. A few years of internal tranquillity, frugality, and attention to the revenues, appeared to be alone requisite, in order to render that kingdom the arbitress of Europe.

Attack of Geneva.

Desirous by a sudden stroke of vigor and policy, though in violation of all the principles of public faith, to repair the breaches made in his dominions during the late unfortunate war, the Duke of Savoy meditated an attack upon Geneva. The project was conceived with so much ability, concealed with such care, and finally executed with such success till the very moment of its entire completion, that the reduction of the city to his obedience appeared to be infallible. It was nevertheless frustrated by a train of accidents, equally singular in themselves, and impossible to have been averted by any exertion of prudence or of valor.

22d Dec.

The assailants, provided with every weapon or instrument that could facilitate the attempt, conducted by officers of capacity, and sheltered under cover of the night, approached the walls of the city. Having placed the ladders, they mounted, put to death without noise the sentinel stationed at the spot, and during near two hours remained masters of the place. But, the alarm being at length given, the

Its ill success.

inhabitants flew to arms. The Savoyards, overpowered by numbers, prevented from admitting their companions who waited without

out the gates, and confused by the darkness, were obliged to precipitate themselves from the battlements. Thirteen of the most distinguished and intrepid individuals among them, capitulated sword in hand, on promise of life and safety: but the fury of the populace, justly irritated, having compelled the magistrates to deliver them up as victims, they were strangled on the ensuing day. Charles Emanuel, who in full confidence of becoming speedily master of Geneva, had advanced to a village only a league distant from it, returned to Turin, covered with confusion. In his letters addressed to the Swiss Cantons, he attempted to colour the proceeding under various pretences. It is nevertheless difficult to justify, or even to palliate an enterprize, undertaken in time of profound peace, against a republic, incontestably, though not specifically included among the allies of France, and guaranteed by the two recent treaties concluded at Lyons and at Vervins. The powerful interposition of Henry, who menaced the Duke of Savoy with a renewal of hostilities, if he repeated the attack on Geneva; sustained by the mediation of the Helvetic body, deeply interested in its preservation; produced a definitive agreement between them, in the course of the ensuing year. During more than two centuries which have since elapsed, no descendant of Charles Emanuel, though the princes of his family have been eminent for ambition and capacity, ever ventured to attempt the reduction

Savoyards, put to death.

Interposition of Henry.

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of Geneva by force; and that small republic continued, under the powerful protection of

1602. France, to maintain its political independance down to the period, when it was swallowed up in the convulsions that succeeded the subversion of the French monarchy.[c]

1603. The historian, who during the first nine years of the reign of Henry the Fourth, from his accession, down to the peace of Vervins, can scarcely keep pace with the number of events which present themselves, finds an equal sterility prevail thro'out the concluding period; but particularly between the execution of Biron, and the King's assassination by Ravaillac. The operations of war, rapid, decisive, and picturesque, excite a more lively interest, and awaken a more animated attention, than regulations of policy, or establishments of domestic utility. But, the activity of Henry, which had been called out by the dangers of the field, did not slumber in the security of peace. Attentive to avail himself of every occasion which offered, in order to emancipate the crown from its dependance on the great nobility, he repaired to Metz, accompanied by the Queen and court. The government of that important city and citadel, acquired by Henry the Second, and defended against all the efforts of the Emperor Charles the Fifth, by the first Duke of Guise; a place, which as it covered the

Vigilance of the King. March.

[c] Matthieu, vol. ii. liv. v. p. 421—443. Sully, vol. i. tome ii. p. 56. De Thou, vol. xiv. p. 124—129. Guichenon, vol. i. p. 787—789. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 259—264. Chron. Sept. p. 364—368.

eastern

eastern frontier towards Lorrain and Germany, was inestimable to France; had been conferred by the late King, on his favorite Epernon, who placed there one of his own devoted adherents. This man, profiting of various accidents which intervened during the course of the late civil wars, had not only in a great measure thrown off all submission to his benefactor; but had proceeded to exercise a violent and indefinite authority over the liberty, and even over the lives of the inhabitants. Epernon having vainly endeavoured to accommodate the difference by negotiation, or to render himself master of the citadel, was compelled to remain a passive spectator of its surrender to the King. He preserved only the nominal government of Metz; the efficient command being given to Montigny, one of the most zealous of the royal followers, on whose fidelity and allegiance Henry knew that he might securely confide in every emergency. [d]

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He acquires the possession of Metz.

His return to the capital was accelerated by the unpleasing intelligence of the decease of Elizabeth, Queen of England. That illustrious princess, during a reign of more than four-and-forty years, had excited the respect, and attracted the admiration, of all Europe. To Henry, at every period, whether prosperous or adverse, she had extended her protection, and lent her assistance. During the two arduous sieges of

24th Mar. Death of Elizabeth.

[d] Chron. Sept. p. 382, 383. Sully, vol. i. tome ii. p. 84—86. De Thou, vol. xiv. p. 130, 131. Matthieu, vol. i. liv. vi. p. 470—474. Hist. d'Epernon, vol. ii. p. 256—265.

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Rouen and of Amiens, her forces had served with distinguished valor: even after the abjuration of the King of France, Elizabeth, though she thought proper to upbraid and to condemn, did not desert her ally. She probably felt, like Sully, the indispensable necessity of his renunciation of the reformed religion. The magnanimity, policy, and enlargement of mind, common to them both, cemented their friendship. In their irreconcilable enmity to the house of Austria, they strongly united; and it seemed difficult to determine which of the two princes had received the deepest wounds from the hand of Philip the Second. Elizabeth disdaining to be included in that treaty, which only five years before, had terminated the long war between the crowns of France and Spain; from the eminence on which she stood, continued to desolate the Spanish monarchy in every quarter of the globe, while she aided the Dutch with her troops and treasures. Henry, through the medium of Rosny, as well as of Biron, whom he sent successively as his embassadors to the court of England, had recently received the most unequivocal proofs of her regard; and they only waited for a convenient occasion of attacking Philip the Third with their united strength.[e]

Policy of that princess.

Her union with Henry.

Accession of James the First.

The regret which he felt for the loss of so valuable an ally, was encreased by his uncer-

[e] Sully, vol. i. tome ii. p. 86. Matthieu, vol. ii. liv. vi. p. 488—508. De Thou, vol. xiv. p. 142—148.

tainty

tainty relative to the character, intentions, and political conduct of her successor. A vast and important revolution in the system of Europe was about to take place, by the efficient union of the two crowns of England and Scotland under one head; as those of France and Scotland had been nominally united, near half a century earlier, in the person of Francis the Second. Henry was well aware that James the First might neither inherit the talents, nor embrace the views of his predecessor. Confined to a remote corner of the North, his capacity and disposition were very imperfectly known beyond the limits of his native dominions. But many circumstances led to apprehend, that he might pursue a less glorious, as well as a less judicious system of policy, than that of Elizabeth. He had hitherto displayed neither aptitude, nor ability for war; and far from being disposed to aid the United Provinces against Spain, he had betrayed a contrary inclination on various occasions. The court of Madrid already anticipated with joy his accession, as the signal of peace between the two crowns; and it was well known that Cecil, who presided since his father Lord Burleigh's death, in the counsels of England, was not averse to such a measure, for a variety of reasons. [f]

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Expectations formed of him.

Impelled by considerations of such magnitude and importance, Henry determined to send an embassador without delay, for the purpose of sounding the new King's intentions.

Embassy of Rosny.

[f] Hume, Hist. of England, vol. vi. p. 7. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 274.

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He selected for a charge at once so delicate and so arduous, the same minister whom he had formerly employed on a similar errand to the deceased Queen. Rosny, Superintendant of the finances, was a servant on whose capacity, zeal, and fidelity, he could not only rely; but whose person and mission, he well knew, would be rendered acceptable to James, from their common adherence to the Protestant religion. His instructions, framed with consummate skill, embraced every proposition which could tend to cement the alliance subsisting between France and England; to humble the house of Austria; and to reduce the dominions of Philip the Third within narrower limits. The embassador was empowered to enlarge or to contract them, as he should find it expedient or judicious, according to circumstances. Rosny, accompanied by a splendid train, arriving in London, was received by James with demonstrations not only of regard, but of the warmest attachment. In the course of little more than a fortnight, that able statesman moved every spring, and availed himself of every means, by which the object of his negotiation could be facilitated, or accelerated. While he awakened the sensibility, he pointed the attention of the King, to the inordinate ambition, and disproportionate greatness of the Spanish monarch, considered as a member of the European system. He shewed the ease with which, by a union of their forces and counsels, when supported by the Kings of Denmark, Sweden, and the Protestant

Objects of his mission.

13th June.

His reception,

and negotiation.

tant princes of the German empire; Henry and James might dissever Milan, Naples, together with the other detached provinces of Spain, from the obedience of Philip. To his arguments, he added every flattering eulogium, and every generous incentive, calculated to propel the deliberations of the Scottish prince. But he was not long in perceiving that the love of peace, however insecure or inglorious might be its foundations, constituted James's predominant passion; that pusillanimity, inconstancy, and levity, characterised his measures; that frugality was not in the list of his virtues; and that no co-operation of energy or duration could be expected from such a sovereign and government. He wisely therefore limited his exertions to the attainment of more practicable objects; namely, a defensive alliance between the two kingdoms, the support of the Dutch United Provinces, and a treaty for the mutual protection of France and England, if either country should be attacked by Spain. To these propositions James lent a favorable ear, and gave his immediate assent. Rosny, dismissed with testimonies of personal esteem, was received by Henry on his return, with the gratitude justly due to his distinguished services[g]. It became nevertheless apparent, by the peace shortly afterwards concluded between the new King of Great Britain and Philip the Third, that James had determined to adopt a

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Success of it

[g] Sully, vol. i. tome ii. p. 89—165. De Thou, vol. xiv. p. 151—153. Matthieu, vol. ii. liv. vi. p. 535—548. Hume, vol. vi. p. 6—8. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 274—277. Chron. Sept. p. 410—412.

policy,

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policy, widely different from the measures of the preceding reign.

1603. Internal regulations.

While Henry directed his attention to conciliate the friendship of England, he was not inattentive to every operation which could confirm the tranquillity, or augment the prosperity of his own subjects. Manufactures, whether those of necessity, or of taste and refinement, received a liberal encouragement. The fabrication of silk, which Francis the First had attempted to introduce among the French; but which, in common with many other useful inventions, had disappeared during the course of the civil wars, was revived. Silk-worms were brought from Italy and Sicily, into the southern provinces of France; and the cultivation of mulberry-trees, so requisite for the nourishment of those insects, was enjoined by the government. With a view of giving additional energy to the industry of his people, the sumptuary laws regulating and restraining articles of dress, were annulled. In the adoption of principles so enlarged, the King ventured to oppose the advice of Rosny his minister, who remonstrated with warmth against establishments, calculated as he conceived, to enervate the French, and to destroy their martial originality of character, while the public morals would be proportionably deteriorated by their introduction. But Henry, either more sagacious, or more enterprizing, remained inflexible; and experience justified the expansion of his views, by the profits derived from the various branches of manufac-

Establishment of manufactures of silk.

Enlargement of the King's views.

facture which he established throughout his dominions.[h]

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1603.

The profound repose enjoyed by France at this period, neither diminished the King's vigilance and circumspection, nor exempted him in his private capacity, from a variety of troubles. He had not found in his marriage with Mary of Medicis, all the domestic comforts and alleviations of which that union is capable, when cemented by mutual esteem and confidence. If the source of these misunderstandings was in part to be attributed to the Queen, a greater portion of them might without injustice be laid to the account of Henry. The obstinacy, coldness, jealousy, and violence, which characterised the Tuscan princess, derived their origin principally from the inconstancy and infidelity of her husband. Far from reforming his licentious conduct as he advanced in years, his amours became more numerous. In the animated conversation, wit, and gaiety of the Marchioness of Verneuil, he sought to dissipate the dulness, or to obliterate the vexation, which he found at home. That insolent and artful female, did not scruple to level the severest shafts of satire, or of malevolent ridicule, against the Queen herself. Neither the extraction, the personal defects, nor the intellectual weaknesses of Mary, were spared on these occasions. All the expressions

Domestic troubles of Henry.

His amours.

[h] Sully, vol. i. tome ii. p. 180, 181. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 277—281. Matthieu, vol. ii. liv. vi. p. 455—457. Chron. Sept. p. 409, 410.

of

CHAP. VIII.

1603. Marchioness of Verneuil. Conchini, and Leonora Galigäi.

of the Marchioness were reported with exaggeration to her rival, by the spies or emissaries whom she retained. Two Florentines, Conchino Conchini, and Leonora Galigäi, his wife, who became unhappily in the sequel, too conspicuous in the history of France; divided the affections of that Princess. Embittering the causes of her uneasiness, they alienated her from the King, and inspired her with projects of vengeance against the person who molested her repose. Henry, weak, irresolute, and almost timid in his own family, neither punished, nor removed from the Queen's presence, the authors of their mutual discord. They even continued to augment in their influence, as well as in their power and arrogance, during the remainder of his reign. The palace of the Louvre became a scene of perpetual strife, and of indecent altercation; the publicity of which, diminished the respect and veneration felt for a prince, so illustrious in his public capacity. Scarcely could the interposition or mediation of the ministers, to which expedient recourse was had, establish from time to time a frail reconciliation, perpetually succeeded by new, and more inveterate disputes.[i]

Malcontents.

Nor did Henry experience in his family alone, the disquietudes inseparably annexed to the condition of man; to which kings are even more exposed in proportion to their elevation. The court and kingdom teemed with malcontents

[i] Sully, vol. i. tome ii. p. 44, 45. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 282, and p. 298—300. Amours d'Henry IV., p. 71—76.

of

of every description. He was compelled to tolerate the insolence of the Count of Soissons, and even to interpose his authority in order to suspend, or to avert the effects of that Prince's enmity towards Rosny, which revived on the slightest, and most groundless pretences[k]. With the Duke of Epernon he was involved in perpetual quarrels, respecting the patronage and prerogatives annexed to his office of Colonel-general of the French infantry; a post which the improvident weakness of Henry the Third, had rendered almost independant of the crown. The haughty favorite, who appeared on various occasions, disposed to take up arms against his sovereign, ventured to retire with intentions the most hostile, to his government of Angouleme: his apprehensions nevertheless, which restrained him from proceeding to extremities, induced him to repair his fault by a voluntary submission[l]. The Hugonots, a formidable body, demanded the unceasing vigilance of administration, to watch their motions, and to anticipate, or to frustrate their designs. Bouillon, though in a species of exile, remained still an object of apprehension; and La Tremouille excited dangerous intrigues in Poitou.

1603.

Count of Soissons.

Epernon.

The Hugonot leaders.

Lesdiguieres, who exercised an almost independant authority throughout the province of Dauphiné; du Plessis Mornay, and various other Protestant chiefs, were either discontented, or destitute of attachment towards a Prince, who

[k] Sully, vol. i. tome ii. p. 177—179.
[l] Mezeray, vol. x. p. 283, 284.

had

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had abandoned their party and religious persuasion. Propositions of a nature highly offensive to the person and dignity of the reigning Pope Clement the Eighth, as well as to the pontifical character and office itself, had been agitated and adopted in one of their Synods, held at Gap, a town of Dauphiné, situated near the foot of the Alps. They had even arrogated in that assembly, a right which seemed to be incompatible with the subjection due to the crown, by admitting and giving audience, not only to delegates from the Protestant churches within the kingdom, but to embassadors deputed by foreign powers[m]. With a view to counteract these machinations, and at the same time to balance the credit of La Tremouille in Poitou, a province of great extent, in which the Hugonots were numerous; the King conferred the government of it on Rosny. He already possessed many of the highest offices of state, besides the Superintendence of the finances; and Henry, who reposed an unlimited confidence in his talents, no less than in his fidelity, raised him soon afterwards to the summit of honors, by creating him Duke of Sully.[n]

1603. October. Synods held by the Protestants.

Rosny, made governor of Poitou.

December.

1604. Commercial rupture with Spain.

If the exhausted condition of the Spanish monarchy, and the incapacity of its sovereign, or the want of vigor in his minister, prevented an open rupture from taking place between the two

[m] Matthieu, vol. ii. liv. vi. p. 596—604. De Thou, vol. xiv. p. 157—160. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 284—288. Sully, vol i. tome ii. p. 183, 184.

[n] Sully, vol. i. tome ii. p. 187—189.

crowns; it could not suspend the secret effects of the animosity felt by the court of Madrid. Continual occasions of jealousy and dispute, commercial or political, presented themselves. Henry, it was well known, continued to aid the United Provinces with supplies of men and money, notwithstanding the peace concluded at Vervins. Philip having imposed a duty of thirty per cent. on the importation of all articles of merchandize belonging to France, in which prohibition he was imitated by the Arch-duke Albert, as sovereign of the Low Countries; the King, irritated at a measure so injurious to his subjects, interdicted by an edict, all communication whatsoever with Spain or Flanders. He even persisted to enforce the order, notwithstanding the remonstrances of his own people, and the indirect menaces of the Duke of Lerma. Mutual necessity, together with the distress occasioned by the suspension of every species of commercial intercourse, induced the two powers at length, to submit their respective complaints to the Papal arbitration. The prohibitions being in consequence taken off, trade mutually revived between their subjects.°

CHAP. VII. 1604.

Accommodation of it.

Unable, since the discovery and punishment of Biron's conspiracy, to induce any of the great nobility of France, to renew a similar correspondence, the Spanish first minister did not neglect to avail himself of the inferior instruments of treason. A young man named

Affair of L'Hoste.

° De Thou, vol. xiv. p. 263—265. Matthieu, vol. ii. liv. vii. p. 659—661, and p. 772—775. Sully, vol. i. tome ii. p. 218, and p. 223, 224. Chron. Sept. p. 452—455, and p. 498—500.

L'Hoste,

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L'Hoste, who filled a confidential situation in the office of Villeroy, Secretary of state for foreign affairs; having been corrupted by a considerable sum of money, betrayed the most important secrets of the department to Zuniga, the embassador of the Catholic King. Being at length discovered, he fled, and had already reached the bank of the Marne, near La Ferté, on his way to the frontiers of Lorrain, when he was overtaken; and in endeavouring to effect his passage to the opposite side, he perished in the river. His body, brought to Paris, was torn in pieces by wild horses. Villeroy himself narrowly escaped disgrace and dismission for the crime of his clerk, in whom he had confided with too implicit security; but the difficulty of replacing him with a successor of equal talents, soon obliterated the transaction, and restored him to favor. [p]

24th April. His death.

February. Conspiracy of the Marchioness of Verneuil.

Henry was sensibly affected by the death of his sister, Catherine, Duchess of Bar, which took place at this time, without leaving behind her any issue. But his emotions were soon transferred to another source of uneasiness, at once more painful and more alarming, which originated in his licentious amours. Henrietta d'Entragues, Marchioness of Verneuil, though frustrated in her views of ascending the throne, by the King's marriage with Mary of Medicis; yet continued to carry on with him a commerce

[p] De Thou, vol. xiv. p. 318—320. Sully, vol. i. tome ii. p. 210—217. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 294—297. Matthieu, vol. ii. liv. vii. p. 661—668. Chron. Sept. p. 465—476.

of

of gallantry, and to occupy a distinguished place in his affections. She had even produced him a son, whom he had owned, and publickly legitimated[q]. Such was her audacity, that she did not hesitate on various occasions, to declare his union with the Queen to be invalid, their issue incapable of wearing the crown, and her own title to the rank and prerogatives of his wife, indisputable[r]. Neither menaces nor offers, however advantageous, could prevail on her to restore the paper signed with his hand, given her by Henry, contrary to the advice of Rosny, as the original price of her honor; which instrument she preserved with the most scrupulous care, and secured by a variety of precautions. Conscious of the influence which her personal beauty, together with the charms of her society, had enabled her to obtain over the King, she abused it by perpetual acts of insolence, and even of infidelity. Stimulating his passion by affected scruples, by coquetry, and refusals, she maintained her empire over him, in defiance of himself, of the remonstrances of his ministers, and of the suggestions of his own judgment; nor was she ever more secure of retaining him in her chains, than at the moment when their final separation appeared to be imminent and inevitable.[s]

CHAP. VII. 1604.

Causes of it.

Mary of Medicis, incensed at her temerity, and alarmed at her pretensions, insisted with

Entragues restores the en-

[q] De Thou, vol. xiv. p. 129, 130. Amours d'Hen. IV., p. 75, 76.

[r] De Thou, vol. xvi. p. 321. Sully, vol. i. tome ii. p. 204, 205.

[s] Cabinet d'Henry IV., par d'Anquetil, vol. i. p. 92—94, and p. 171, 172. Amours d'Henry, IV., p. 72—76.

 impor-

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1604.

importunity, that the promise of marriage which Henry had given her, should be resumed. The demand only served to irritate, and to drive to extremities the Marchioness. Her father nevertheless, on receiving a sum of money which did not fall far short of nine thousand pounds Sterling, and a promise of the dignity of Marshal of France, produced a paper which he declared to be the original. It was delivered back to the King, in presence of various princes of the blood, and officers of state, who witnessed its identity, by an act drawn up for that purpose. The Queen's apprehension, calmed by the restitution of an engagment, which might have been converted to purposes the most injurious to herself, as well as to her children, subsided; and a temporary tranquillity succeeded to the late violent agitation in the court[t]. But, Henry speedily found reason to repent of having exasperated a haughty and vindictive woman, neither restrained by principle nor by affection, from seeking to revenge the insult offered to her pride. Her half brother, the Count of Auvergne, though recently liberated from confinement, and indebted for his pardon only to the clemency of the King, yet lent his assistance to all her projects. Francis de Balzac d'Entragues, her father, wounded by the past dishonor of his family, and still more incensed at Henry's attempts to

gagement, given by Henry to his daughter.

2d July.

She determines on revenge.

Projects to assassinate the King.

[t] De Thou, vol. xiv. p. 320, 321. Cabinet d'Henry IV., vol. i. p. 178—180. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 300, 301. Sully, vol. i. tome ii. p. 248, 249.

seduce

seduce his second daughter; not only entered into the general conspiracy, but appears to have meditated designs, levelled personally against his life. He even ventured to attack his sovereign in one of those nocturnal expeditions, which Henry undertook to gratify his passion; and from which alarming situation the King extricated himself only by valor and good fortune. The greatest prince in Europe, the hero of his age, had nearly fallen a sacrifice to his indecent pursuit of pleasures, equally unbecoming his station, and we might add, his period of life, as he had already passed his fiftieth year. History vainly attempts to draw a veil over these excesses, which involuntarily diminish our veneration for Henry the Fourth.[u]

The

[u] Cabinet d'Henry IV., vol. i. p. 180—185. Memorie recondite de Vittorio Siri. iv. partie, p. 292. Le Laboureur sur Castlenau, vol. ii. p. 600—603. Journal d'Henry IV., vol. ii. p. 55, 56. Matthieu, vol. ii. liv. vii. p. 796. Memoires d'Amelot de la Houssaye, artic. "Entragues."

There is not any transaction of the French history, since the accession of the family of Bourbon, perplexed with such doubts, or involved in such obscurity, as the conspiracy of the Marchioness of Verneuil. The contemporary writers were either ignorant of the particulars, or they did not venture to disclose them, from obvious motives of delicacy and caution. De Thou, who from his station in life, must have possessed means of information, confines himself to circumstances, which by their nature were universally known. Matthieu, Historiographer of France, and unquestionably informed of the facts, stops short, declaring that it is not permitted to subjects to raise the veil, which conceals the mysterious secrets of the sovereign. It is true that he minutely relates the seizure of the Count of Auvergne; but he presumes not to enquire into, nor to account for its cause. Bassompierre gives no lights on the subject; nor do we find in the "Amours d'Henry IV." written by Margaret of Guise, Princess of Conti, any solution of the enigma. Yet it is impossible to doubt that both Bassompierre and the Princess knew

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1604. Stipulations of

The three principal conspirators, in repeated conferences which they held with Taxis and Zuniga, successively embassadors from the Catholic

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the affair in its most minute detail. The "Journal d'Henry IV." is limited to judicial facts, of general notoriety. Only short and detached fragments are to be gleaned from Sully, who considered it as a secret of state. In the "Memorie recondite" of Vittorio Siri, there is a considerable detail: but it is embarrassed, confused, and contradictory. The "Chronologie septenaire" of Cayet, extends only to the end of the year 1604; and the transaction was then too recent, as well as of too delicate a nature, for him to give it any place in his work. The nature and genius of Mezeray's history, did not allow him to descend to minute narrations of any kind; and he wrote at the distance of more than forty years after the facts. We must likewise recollect that the grandson of Henry then occupied the throne. D'Anquetil, in his "Cabinet d'Henry IV." has with great labor, endeavoured to collect, to arrange, and to compare, all the different accounts of this plot. Yet he confesses his inability to discriminate, or to ascertain the truth. He seems even either never to have seen, or to have omitted to mention, one of the most curious and entertaining documents to be found in any author; namely the relation of the capture of the Count d'Entragues, by the Provost Defunctis, in the castle of Marcoussis. We are indebted for it, to the diligence of "Le Laboureur sur Castelnau;" and the piece carries in every line, the most genuine marks of authenticity. It appears from thence, beyond a question, that d'Entragues did *not* deliver up the original promise of marriage, given by the King to his daughter. That engagement, drawn up in Henry's own hand writing, was found by Lomenie, secretary of state, who had been sent expressly for the purpose. We may judge of the importance annexed to it, by the precautions that had been taken for its preservation. Lomenie discovered it in a glass bottle, sealed; within a second glass bottle, laid upon cotton, and closed up in a wall of one of the apartments at Marcoussis. He brought it to the King. The treaty between Philip the Third and the conspirators, the cypher used in their correspondence, together with various other letters, were likewise discovered at Marcoussis.

The attempt of the Count d'Entragues, to kill the King in the forest of Vernenil, when going disguised to find his youngest daughter, forms not one of the least wonderful or strange events of the conspiracy. It cannot be doubted that the Count *did* attack him, and that Henry only escaped by vigor and address. Fifteen men were stationed in different parts of the wood, in order to intercept and murder him. Some of them he avoided without knowing it: his horse

tholic King to the Court of France, laid open their intentions, demanding at the same time the powerful co-operation of Spain to effect their accomplishment. Philip, happy to find an occasion of wounding the private peace, at the same time that he endangered the crown of his inveterate enemy, complied with all their requisitions. He proceeded so far as to stipulate on oath, that if the Marchioness would deliver up to him her son by Henry, the child should be immediately acknowledged Dauphin, and heir to the French throne. It was likewise added, that five fortresses situated in Portugal, should be ceded to him as places of security; together with an annual revenue of more than twenty thousand pounds Sterling, and an asylum for his mother. Appointments, pecuniary, as well as military, of magnitude and of trust, were agreed to be given to the Counts of Auvergne, and of Entragues. By the same authority it was settled that an invasion should be made by the Duke of Savoy, on the side of Provence; by the Count de Fuentes, in Burgundy; and

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1604. Philip the Third, with the conspirators.

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horse and his courage enabled him to disperse the others. Even after this escape, d'Entragues compelled his youngest daughter to give him an appointment in a solitary place, where it was intended to have assassinated him: but, though she was obliged to comply with her father's commands, she took care to warn the King of his danger. None of these facts came forward on the trial; and it became equally an object to Henry, to the Marchioness, and to the Count d'Entragues, to bury them in the deepest oblivion. All the documents and proofs tending to throw light upon it, were carefully suppressed. But, what an idea does it not convey of Henry's imprudence and subjection to his passions, which could precipitate him on such adventures?

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by Spinola, in Champagne. Thro'out every part of the kingdom, concealed adherents were asserted to be ready at a proper moment, who would appear and aid the insurgents. The Count of Auvergne, in consequence of these preparations, repaired immediately to the province of that name, situated in the centre of France; a portion of the kingdom where his influence, authority, and the attachment of the inhabitants to the family of Valois from which he sprung, would enable him to excite a dangerous insurrection. Only a favourable opportunity appeared to be wanting, in order to carry their projects into execution.[x]

Henry discovers the plot.

A plot of such magnitude and extent, could not however long elude the vigilance of Henry and his ministers. An intercepted letter of the Count of Auvergne, addressed to one of his friends, which conveyed the first intelligence of it, excited so much alarm, as to induce the King to command his attendance at court without delay. Terrified at so peremptory a summons, conscious of his guilt, and expecting to be again immured in the same prison from which he had been recently liberated, he invented continual pretexts to account for his not complying with the order. After vainly expecting him to appear during a considerable time, measures were therefore taken to seize his person. But, so unremitting was his circum-

[x] Cabinet d'Henry IV., vol. i. p. 185—187, and p. 194, 195. Le Lab. sur Cast. vol. ii. p. 602. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 301, 302.

spection, that it required equal dexterity and courage to secure him, without coming to the last extremities. Every obstacle was nevertheless surmounted by the intrepidity and address of two officers, d'Eurre and Nerestang, who having approached him under pretence of respect, unhorsed, disarmed, and made him prisoner. Being conducted with the greatest precautions, to Paris, he was confined anew in the Bastile, where he occupied the apartment lately inhabited by Biron. Entragues, nearly at the same period, was arrested at his castle of Malesherbes, and committed to the prison of the "Conciergerie," in the "Palais;" a place of confinement unhappily become too famous in the annals of the present age, as the last stage of the imprisonment and sufferings of the unfortunate, but heroic Mary Antonietta, Queen of France. The Marchioness of Verneuil, treated with more distinction than her father and brother, was only guarded in her own house at Paris, by the Lieutenant of the police. Orders were immediately issued by Henry, directing the parliament, as the supreme criminal tribunal of the kingdom, to prosecute the delinquents with the utmost severity.[y]

1604. Seizure of the Count of Auvergne, September, and of his accomplices.

While the public mind thro'out France, was suspended in mute astonishment at these extra-

20th Sept. Siege of Ostend,

[y] Chron. Sept. p. 505. Matthieu, vol. ii. liv. vii. p. 781—800. De Thou, vol. xiv. p. 321—324. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 302—304. Cabinet d'Henry IV., vol. i. p. 187—191. Journal d'Henry IV., vol. ii. p. 62, and p. 64. Sully, vol. i. tome ii. p. 261, 262, and p. 267—270.

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1604. and surrender.

ordinary occurences; the city of Ostend surrendered to Albert and Isabella, after having been invested more than three years. It constituted one of the most memorable sieges known in the modern history of Europe; Ostend long serving as a theatre, on which the martial youth of England, France, and Holland, eagerly sought renown, or acquired experience. Every resource of the military art then known or practiced, was exerted on both sides: and Pompeio Targon, a Roman engineer, who afterwards became celebrated under the reign of Louis the Thirteenth, by constructing the dyke to expel the sea before Rochelle, when that city was besieged by Cardinal Richelieu; attempted, though vainly, to prevent the entrance of supplies into the port of Ostend. During the prosecution of the siege, Maurice, Prince of Orange, landing on the isle of Cadsand, invested the town of Sluys, and rendered himself master of it, notwithstanding the utmost efforts of the Spaniards to relieve the place. The capture was justly regarded by the Dutch, as forming no inadequate equivalent for the surrender of Ostend; which city did not capitulate till the works were reduced by the artillery of the enemy, to a shapeless heap of ruins. Above seventy thousand of the veteran troops of Spain and Flanders perished under the walls, between the commencement and the termination of the siege, by the combined operation of sickness and the sword. To the great abilities of Ambrose Spinola, who commanded the army of

Maurice takes Sluys.

Appearance of Spinola.

of the Arch-duke, was principally due its final reduction. He was the last general of transcendent merit and talents, sent by the court of Madrid to the Netherlands; and he approved himself neither unworthy to succeed to the Prince of Parma, nor unequal to oppose Maurice, Prince of Orange. During the course of the succeeding campaign, he once more transferred the scene of war to the banks of the Rhine; invaded the provinces situate beyond the Maese, from which the Spaniards had long been expelled; and retarded by his able measures, though he could not ultimately prevent, the complete emancipation of the United States from the house of Austria.[z]

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His exploits.

At the other extremity of Europe, the Ottoman armies, though checked and impeded by the revolts of the Janizaries, by the feuds or intrigues of the Seraglio, and by the death of Mahomet the Third, to whom succeeded Achmet, a minor; yet continued to advance along the banks of the Danube through Upper Hungary. The Tartars even made incursions to the gates of Presburg and of Vienna. Rodolph the Second, who no longer held his court in the latter of those cities; immured in his laboratory at Prague, employed in researches of alchymy or of natural philosophy, abandoned to his brothers, the Arch-dukes Mathias and Maximilian, the care of Austria, as well as of all

State of Germany, and of Hungary.

[z] De Thou, vol. xiv. p. 193—222, and p. 349—361. Matthieu, vol. ii. liv. vii. p. 699—714, and p. 726—755. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 314—316.

his

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his other hereditary dominions. Destitute of issue, negligent of public affairs, and declining in years, the Emperor was scarcely known to exist beyond the confines of Bohemia, except by report: while the imperial power, which, only fifty years before, under Charles the Fifth, had threatened to swallow up the liberties of Germany, was fallen into a state of oblivion or contempt[a]. In the north of Europe, Charles, Duke of Sudermania, youngest of the sons of the great Gustavus, after having administered the affairs of Sweden during several years, with the power of regent; and having expelled his nephew, Sigismund, King of Poland; was ultimately elected to fill the Swedish throne, himself, by the States General of that kingdom, under the name of Charles the Ninth[b]. He retained the royal authority and title to the end of his life; transmitting at his decease the sceptre to another Gustavus, destined to augment the fame of the family of Vasa, while he carried the victorious arms of his countrymen beyond the banks of the Oder, the Elbe, and the Danube, almost to the frontiers of Italy.

Revolution in Sweden.

November. Trial of the conspirators.

The parliament of Paris being authorized, and even enjoined by the crown, proceeded meanwhile to interrogate the prisoners submitted to their jurisdiction. They were first

[a] La Croix, Hist. Ottom. vol. ii. p. 56—74. De Thou, vol. xiv. p. 169—176, and p. 273—284. Pfeffel, Hist. de Allemagne, vol. ii. p. 238—244. Sacy, Hist. d'Hongrie, vol. ii. p. 151—157.

[b] Puffendorf, History of Sweden, p. 394—400. De Thou, vol. xvi. p. 268—273.

sepa-

separately examined, and afterwards confronted with each other. But, instructed by the example of Biron, who relying on the fidelity of La Fin, had unguardedly admitted the validity of his testimony; they began by loading each other with maledictions and reproaches, calculated to weaken or totally destroy the force of their respective depositions. The Count of Auvergne accused his sister of participation in every act of treason, and endeavoured to diminish his own criminality, by proving her equal, or deeper guilt. D'Entragues on the contrary, who exculpated his daughter, imputed to her brother the whole machination. They both admitted their interviews with Taxis and Zuniga to have taken place, but denied that any treasonable propositions had been ever agitated in those conferences. Auvergne pleaded moreover, a pardon already granted him by Henry; asserting that he had carried on the correspondence with the embassadors of Spain, not only with the privity, but even by the express command of the King himself.

Their defence.

December.

The defence of Entragues might rather be termed a crimination of his sovereign, than a vindication of his own conduct. With bitter reflections on his personal misfortune, he deplored the lot of an aged and dishonored parent, on whose family an eternal opprobrium had been fixed by the licentious passion of the very prince, who now attempted to crush him under the imputation of fictitious crimes. He justified the intention of his daughter to withdraw

Entragues recriminates on the King.

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draw into Spain or Flanders, from the apprehension which she necessarily felt of becoming the victim of an enraged and jealous Queen, who perpetually threatened vengeance. Nor did he scruple to inform his judges, of the endeavours used by Henry to seduce his second daughter; of the disguises and nocturnal expeditions in which he had repeatedly engaged with that view; and of the contents of his amorous epistles still in her possession. He concluded by insinuating in very unequivocal language, that the object of the present prosecution was only levelled at his life, in order to deprive his helpless child of the natural and incorruptible guardian of her honor. The Marchioness of Verneuil, when brought in her turn to the bar, manifested more indignation, than either terror or contrition. Neither the fear of punishment, nor the desire of life, could bend her haughty spirit; and she still persisted to consider herself as the legitimate, though oppressed and persecuted wife, of the King of France. At the bare mention of the Count of Auvergne, she became furious; stigmatized him with every epithet of abhorrence or of ignominy; and concluded by demanding a pardon for her father, justice for herself, and a scaffold for her brother. [c]

Behaviour of the Marchioness.

1605. They are condemned.

Notwithstanding a defence so framed to operate on the judgment, while it affected the

[c] Cabinet d'Henry IV., vol. i. p. 192—200. De Thou, vol. xiv. p. 418—428. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 317, 318. Journal d'Henry IV., vol. ii. p. 64, 65, and p. 69.

passions

passions of her judges, they did not hesitate to pronounce sentence against her. She was condemned to be closely imprisoned in the convent of Beaumont near Tours, till more ample information could be obtained relative to her pretended crimes. The Counts of Auvergne and of Entragues, were at the same time sentenced to expiate their offences on a scaffold in the "Place de Greve," together with an Englishman named Morgan, their accomplice; but the execution was suspended by an order from the court. Mary of Medicis already anticipated the disgrace of her insolent rival, the punishment of those individuals who had presumed to espouse her pretensions, and the exile of a woman whom she equally dreaded and detested. In this expectation, she found herself nevertheless deceived. A powerful advocate pleaded in the bosom of the King, for a mistress whom he still loved. She soon received permission to retire to her castle at Verneuil: by a subsequent mitigation of the sentence, she was restored to the full enjoyment of her freedom, and the proceedings against her were annulled. Entragues, reinstated in blood and honors, was exiled to his house at Malesherbes; and Morgan was commanded to quit the kingdom. The Count of Auvergne alone, whose duplicity had rendered him undeserving and incapable of being trusted, remained a prisoner in the Bastile; where he languished many years, and was only set at

1st Feb. Sentences.

23d Mar. Henry pardons them.

Imprisonment of Auvergne.

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at liberty under the regency, in the ensuing reign. [d]

1605.

Reflexions on the transaction.

Whenever we reflect on the whole of this extraordinary transaction, we know not whether most to wonder at the shameless indecency of Henry, in thus unveiling to the whole nation, the irregularities of his private life; or whether most to reprobate his rendering the highest criminal tribunal of France, the engine and instrument to humble a haughty mistress. It was not a crime of state, but a love intrigue, which was apparently submitted to their enquiry, and afterwards withdrawn at a proper time from their jurisdiction. The King, it was evident, never meant to dishonor the object of his affection, though he desired to reduce her to a necessity of complying with his will. The children whom she had borne him, formed the pledges of her safety. Biron, it was true, had suffered capital punishment, for acts of inferior atrocity. But, Henry was not disposed to put to death Entragues, for attempts, which however criminal in themselves, were aimed more at the man, than at the monarch; which he had provoked by his licentious conduct; and which originated more in private vengeance, than in treason against the state. Many reasons likewise induced him to spare the Count of Auvergne: the dying recommendations of his two predecessors, Charles

Motives of the King's conduct,

in sparing the conspirators.

[d] De Thou, vol. xiv. p. 429, 430. Cabinet d'Henry IV., vol. i. p. 200—205. Journal d'Henry IV., vol. ii. p. 70, 71. Sully, vol. i. tome ii. p. 333.

the

the Ninth, and Henry the Third; the blood of Valois which circulated in his veins; and perhaps still more, the natural apprehension that such an example might at another period, form a precedent for bringing to the scaffold his own illegitimate issue, if they should ever become involved in treasonable accusations. Far from renouncing, as might have been expected, his connexion with the Marchioness of Verneuil, he renewed with her a commerce of gallantry; and indirectly permitted, if he did not encourage her, in lancing the shafts of her malicious pleasantry against the Queen. Yet, inconstant to his mistresses, as faithless to his wives, he commenced a fresh amour with Jaquelina de Beuil, whom he created Countess of Moret; after having, in the view of all the inhabitants of Paris, caused her to solemnize a mock ceremony of marriage with a young man of condition. She soon afterwards brought him a son, whom he subsequently legitimated. If we consider the age of Henry at the time when he committed these excesses, we must feel the condemnation excited by them, considerably aggravated. The veneration for the royal dignity, as well as the affection felt for his person and character, must have been great, to counterbalance and extinguish the sense of his irregularities, in the minds of his subjects. [e]

New amours of Henry.

[e] Amours d'Henry IV., p. 82—85. Bassomp. vol. i. tome i. p. 103, 104. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 320, 321. Journal d'Henry IV., vol. ii. p. 61, and p. 67.

The

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1605. Transactions in Lombardy.

The attention of the court was however soon diverted from the consideration of domestic intrigues, to foreign transactions. Italy, which attracted expectation, excited alarm for the continuance of its tranquillity. The Count of Fuentes, governor of the Milanese, reviving the obsolete pretensions of the Viscontis and the Sforzas, Dukes of Milan in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; summoned the petty princes or nobles of Lombardy, to produce the titles of their respective fiefs; diffusing consternation by such enquiries, over all that part of Europe. At the same time he constructed the celebrated fort which still bears his name, at the entrance of the Valteline; a mountainous portion of the Alps which interposed between the Milanese and the Tyrol; thus endeavouring by force, as much as by the arts of corruption, to render Spain arbitress of the Grisons[f]. The attempt, if it had proved completely successful, would have united the dominions of the German, with those of the Spanish branch of the house of Austria; who being possessed of the Valteline, and masters of the defiles that conduct through that Alpine region, might have sent mutual succours in case of emergency, to each others assistance. Clement the Eighth terminated his pontificate at this period, after having occupied the chair of St. Peter above thirteen years. Besides the honor of according absolution to a king of France, and receiving

3d March. Death of Clement the Eighth,

[f] De Thou, vol. xvi. p. 408—411. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 324—326. Sully, vol. i. tome ii. p. 297—305.

him

him into the bosom of the Romish communion; he had the felicity of augmenting the patrimony of the ecclesiastical state, by the subjection of the duchy of Ferrara to the Holy See, on the demise of Alfonso the Second. The Cardinal Alexander of Medicis, who had been sent Legate to Henry the Fourth some years earlier; having succeeded Clement, by the exertions of the French faction in the Conclave, he assumed the name of Leo the Eleventh; a name which from its connexion with Leo the Tenth, brings before our minds, that pontificate, so celebrated for its protection of genius. The new Pope, who from the enlarged beneficence of his character, inspired expectation of a mild and happy reign, was the third individual of the family of Medicis, who occupied the chair of St. Peter. But, these premature hopes were blasted by his death, only a few days afterwards; and Borghese, a native of Rome, was elevated to the papal throne, by the title of Paul the Fifth. Baronius, a member of the Sacred College, born at Sora in the kingdom of Naples, and known in the annals of literature by the elegance of his historical writings; appears to have been twice on the point of attaining, by the voluntary suffrages of the Cardinals, to the pontifical dignity. He was as often rejected, in consequence of the efforts of the Spanish party in the Conclave; irritated at the doubts which he had thrown, as an historian, in his "Annales Ecclesiastici," on the validity of the Catholic King's title to the crown of the Two Sicilies; and apprehensive of the

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1st April.

and of Leo the Eleventh.

25th April.

16th May. Election of Paul the Fifth.

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effects which might result from his transcendant integrity of character. [g]

1605. Return of Margaret of Valois, to Paris. August.

Margaret of Valois, Queen of Navarre, last survivor of that illustrious house, after having passed more than twenty years in obscurity, if not in indigence, among the snows and precipices of Auvergne, whither she had fled for refuge; re-appeared at this time, in Paris. The facility which she had manifested to produce the dissolution of her marriage, the consideration naturally excited by her descent from so many sovereigns, and the marks of attachment which she exhibited towards the King, during the late conspiracy of her nephew, the Count of Auvergne; — these combined reasons obliterated in the placable mind of Henry, her multiplied infidelities or criminal excesses of every kind. He received her with testimonies of consideration and respect; lodged her on her arrival, in the royal castle of Madrid, near the capital; and extended to her invariably the most ample protection. In that metropolis she passed the residue of her life, preserving in defiance of the shocks of adversity, and the progress of age, all the eccentric originality of her character. Dividing her leisure between the dissolute gratifications of the senses, and the occasional practices of austere devotion; with which, in imitation of her ancestor Francis the First, she mingled the love of letters, and the cultivation of the fine arts; she presented a singular com-

[g] Histoire des Conclaves, vol. i. p. 294—368. De Thou, vol. xiv. p. 400—408. Hist. de Papes, par Coulon, 2d partie, p. 202—207.

bination of vices and talents. Margaret, who survived the King, experienced after his death, a continuance of the same attention from Mary of Medicis, then become Regent of France. [h] CHAP. VII. 1605.

Neither the execution of Biron, the imprisonment of the Count of Auvergne, the death of the Duke of La Tremouille, an event which took place nearly at the same period, nor the voluntary exile of Bouillon, could extinguish the fermentation existing in the interior provinces of the kingdom. The relations of Biron waited impatiently for a favorable occasion of revenge; while the adherents of the Duke of Bouillon were numerous, as well as powerful. These latter derived additional strength from the support of the Hugonots, who not only solicited his pardon and recall; but with a view of attaining it, indirectly menaced the adoption of measures equally derogatory to the royal authority, and subversive of the public tranquillity. Intelligence of secret practices, and even of matured designs of delivering up various important ports to Spain, was received by the government. But, all these symptoms of insurrection were anticipated by Henry's promptitude, or dissipated by his vigor. Rosny repairing to the assembly of the Protestants held at Chatelherault in Poitou, contrived to mollify their resentment, and to allay their apprehensions, by granting in the name of their common sovereign, a prolongation of the term stipulated for the sur-

July. Fermentation in the interior provinces.

Vigilance of the King.

4th July.

[h] Vie de Marguer. de Val. p. 391—394. De Thou, vol. xiv. p. 434. Sully, vol. i tome ii. p. 289, 290, and p. 365, and p. 368, and p. 373. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 321—323.

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render or restitution of the places of surety accorded to the party. That period was lengthened the space of three years; and the concession, which diffused universal satisfaction, disarmed the most mutinous or discontented of the Hugonot leaders.[i]

1605. 4th Aug.

His measures. 15th Sept.

No sooner was the King relieved from his uneasines son a subject of such importance, than he prepared to reduce the remaining malcontents, by the most speedy as well as rigorous exertions of severity. Quitting Paris, he advanced towards the rivir Loire, preceded by the Duke of Epernon at the head of a body of infantry, and several troops of cavalry; while Rosny followed with a small train of field artillery, adequate to the reduction of any forts which might venture on resistance. A special commission accompanied the forces, designed for the trial and punishment of the rebels: this tribunal being composed of only two masters of requests named for the purpose, vested with ample authority.

He repairs to Limoges. October.

Attended by such a formidable military and judicial escort, Henry continuing his progress, entered Limoges, amidst the warmest testimonies of popular affection. His presence instantly produced submission. The principal insurgents either concealed themselves, or fled beyond the limits of France, or embraced the determination of meriting a pardon, by disclosing the de-

November.

signs of their accomplices. Turenne, and the other fortresses belonging to the Duke of Bouillon, situated in the interior provinces of the kingdom; though specially comprehended

[i] Sully, vol. i. tome ii. p. 359—390. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 329—331.

among

among the places of surety granted to the Protestants, yet did not presume to oppose the royal troops. Having opened their gates, by orders from the Duke himself, on the first summons, it only remained to inflict chastisement on such individuals, as should be juridically convicted of treasonable machinations. The tribunal which was held at Limoges, condemned five to lose their heads, and the sentence was carried into immediate execution. Others being put to death in effigy, their estates were confiscated. The whole conspiracy, which appears rather to have existed in intention, than to have been carried into practice, was rendered abortive; and the King, without waiting to be a spectator of the punishments decreed by the judges, returned to the metropolis. [k]

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1605. Seizure, trial, and execution, of the mutineers.

16th Dec.

November. Troubles in Paris.

New troubles awaited him in that capital, of a nature different indeed from open insurrection, but which nevertheless required the utmost dexterity, as well as conciliation, to appease. They originated in the œconomical and financial plans of Rosny; plans calculated for diminishing the debts of the crown, and at the same time replenishing the royal treasury. With a view to effect those purposes, the Superintendant caused commissioners to be appointed, who were authorized to pay off the life-rents or annuities issuing out of the Town-hall of Paris. Not content with so limited a field for their activity, they commenced enquiries into the origin,

Their causes.

[k] Sully, vol. i. tome ii. p. 391—399. De Thou, vol. xiv. p. 434—439. Hist. de Bouillon, vol. ii. p. 272—276. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 331—333.

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validity, and legitimacy of the respective contracts or debts themselves; and even agitated the propriety of suppressing such, as should appear on examination to be defective. A measure which involved in its consequences, so great a number of individuals, exciting universal alarm throughout Paris; Myron, the first municipal officer of the city, ventured with a hardy frankness to state to the King himself, at once the injustice, and the danger, of persisting in its prosecution. There were not wanting persons in the council of state, who considering such a conduct highly censurable, advised the arrest of Myron. The attempt might nevertheless have been found hazardous, as the Parisians manifested a disposition to take up arms in defence of their virtuous magistrate. But Henry nourished no intention of pushing matters to extremity with his subjects. Convinced of the rectitude of Myron's motives in the remonstrance which he had made, and appeased by the supplications of the proprietors of the annuities in question, who protested their readiness to submit their rights and their property, to his sovereign arbitration, he wisely enjoined the cessation of all further proceedings on the subject.[1]

Henry appeases them by his wisdom and lenity.

Conspiracy of Merargues.

So general seemed to be at this time, the propensity to conspire against the government, that it could neither be repressed by rigor, nor extinguished by clemency. Plots perpetually succeeded each other, all which were fomented

[1] De Thou, vol. xiv. p. 443—446. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 333—335.

or

or produced by the emissaries of the court of Madrid. Merargues, a gentleman of Provence, having undertaken to deliver up the port and city of Marseilles to the Catholic King; he repaired to Paris, in order to concert measures for the purpose with Zuniga, the embassador of Philip. It would nevertheless appear that he possessed more inclination than ability, to effect so arduous a project. Intimation of his design having been transmitted to the administration, by the Duke of Guise, Governor of the province, the conspirator was followed and taken into custody, together with Bruneau, secretary to the Spanish embassador. They were in the act of conferring together, when seized; and a paper having been found upon the secretary, which tended to prove his criminal intentions, he was committed to the Bastile. Merargues being speedily interrogated, was confronted with Bruneau, before the tribunal of the Parliament. Zuniga, who with menaces reclaimed his secretary, complained to the King, that the rights of nations were violated in the seizure of a person regarded as sacred by the laws of nations. But, Henry justified his own conduct on the principles of state necessity and preservation, nor did he liberate Bruneau, till he had confessed the whole transaction. He was then sent back to the embassador, together with a copy of the juridical proceedings. Merargues justly suffered the punishment of his crime, in the "Place de Greve," his four quarters being exposed over the principal gates of the capi-

He is seized, 5th Dec.

toget er with the Spanish secretary.

19th Dec. Execution of Merargues.

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1605. tal[m]. Thro'out the whole transaction, the decline of the Spanish monarchy in vigor became apparent; and how proportionably France had ascended in the scale of nations, during the short period of seven years which had elapsed since the peace of Vervins, was manifested with equal evidence. Charles the Ninth, or Henry the Third, whatever provocation they might have received from Philip the Second, could not have ventured to resent it in the manner that Henry the Fourth displayed towards Philip the Third, and the Cardinal Duke of Lerma. Europe already began to perceive that the balance of power among the great continental states, was rapidly assuming a new direction; and that the house of Bourbon might, at no distant time, become as formidable to the surrounding countries, as the family of Austria had been found for near a century.

1606. January. Projects of Henry. Incensed at such reiterated proofs of the inveterate enmity of the Spanish crown, which never ceased to molest his repose, and even to attack his life; the King began deeply to meditate the execution of that vast project for the humiliation of the Austrian greatness, which he was on the point of commencing only four years afterwards, when assassinated by Ravaillac. It is probable that he would not even have so long delayed it, if Elizabeth, his firm and magnanimous ally, had still continued to

[m] Sully, vol. ii. tome iii. p. 6, 7. De Thou, vol. xiv. p. 439—443. Journal d'Henry IV., vol. ii. p. 88, 89. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 343—347.

reign

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reign over the English: but, from her timid and irresolute successor, who manifested a subserviency to Spain in all his measures, Henry's expectations of support or assistance could only be negative. France, in the lapse of little more than seven years, had in a considerable degree recovered from the wounds inflicted on the country by civil and foreign war. The indefatigable assiduity of Rosny had re-established the finances, which were in a perpetual state of improvement or amelioration. In the arsenal of Paris he had laid up a formidable apparatus for offensive hostilities, in quality of Master-general of the ordnance; while a prodigious treasure in ready money was already accumulated by the Superintendant, in the Bastile. The veteran troops, as well as the youth of France, anxiously anticipated a rupture with Philip the Third. Henry, with a view to that event, as a probable contingency, opened a secret negotiation with the Duke of Savoy, in order to detach him from Spain, by the tempting offer of securing to him the Milanese, with the title of King of Lombardy; stipulating likewise the marriage of his eldest daughter with the Prince of Piedmont, for the purpose of cementing the alliance. To the Duke of Bavaria, one of the most powerful princes of Germany, Henry held out the election to the imperial dignity; an office which must probably soon become vacant by the death of Rodolph, who was declining in health and years. The Venetians, who were closely allied with the French crown, had on every occasion during

Measures for their execution.

Negotiations with foreign powers,

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during his greatest adversity, given him proofs of devotion. From the republic of Holland he might esteem himself secure of vigorous, and effectual co-operation. All the Protestant princes and states of the German empire, looked to him for protection against the encroachments of the house of Austria. Even beyond the shore of the Baltic, he counted allies or friends. Christian the Fourth, King of Denmark, a prince of talents, as well as of a martial character, professed for him a degree of admiration, bordering on idolatry: and Charles the Ninth, who owed in a great measure the attainment of the Swedish crown, to his timely pecuniary supplies, felt towards him the warmest gratitude.[n]

1606. throughout Europe.

Many causes, nevertheless, obvious or latent, contributed to delay the commencement of a war, from which Europe might justly expect, whenever it should take place, to undergo a great political revolution. Mary of Medicis, from whom Henry neither desired to withhold a knowledge of his plans, nor perhaps could easily have concealed his designs, interposed every obstacle in her power to prevent their accomplishment. Bigotted to the Catholic faith, she looked with predilection to Spain, the protectress of that religion; while she equally deprecated all connexions, political or personal, made with heretics. Sprung by her mother, daughter of the Emperor Ferdinand the First,

Impediments to their execution.

Mary of Medicis.

[n] Sully, vol. ii. tome iii. p. 7. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 326, 327. Matthieu, vol. ii. liv. vi. p. 568, 569.

from

from the Austrian family, she already desired to lay the foundation of a double marriage between the two crowns, by the union of her eldest son with a princess of Spain; which alliance, when become regent of France after her husband's death, she ultimately effected. All the zealous Catholics, together with the antient adherents of "the League," who formed a numerous, as well as a powerful party, joined the Queen; nor were there wanting in the cabinet itself, ministers inimical to every measure, by which the Spanish monarchy would be humbled or attacked. Time was necessary to mature the plans commenced or concerted with Savoy, and with Bavaria. Lastly, the body of the Hugonots, though apparently loyal, yet continued to be deeply agitated by the intrigues, and powerfully excited to action by the emissaries, of the Duke of Bouillon*. It became a prince of wisdom and experience to secure on a solid basis the internal tranquillity of his own dominions, before he listened to any propositions, however seductive, of foreign conquest or glory.

1606. The Catholics.

Influenced by these reflexions, Henry determined to begin with reducing to obedience, his expatriated and mutinous subject. During more than three years which had elapsed since the execution of Biron, the Duke of Bouillon had resided beyond the limits of France; professing, it is true, his fidelity and allegiance to the King; but, refusing to give the only solid

Henry resolves to reduce Bouillon.

* Sully, vol. ii. tome iii. p. 7, 8. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 326.

testimony

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testimony of his assertions, by personally justifying himself from the charges imputed to him. He had even recently induced four of the Protestant Cantons of Switzerland, to address a petition to Henry in his behalf. That Prince replied, that he was ready either to grant the Duke a trial, before a fair and impartial tribunal; or disposed to give him the warmest proofs of friendship, if he would throw himself on the royal clemency [p]. Finding however every pacific means of conciliation ineffectual, he issued orders to assemble forces, and prepared to attack Sedan, capital of the duchy of Bouillon, situate on the frontiers of Flanders, with a considerable army. Many persons, employed in offices of the highest trust about the throne, endeavoured to delay and to prevent so hostile a proceeding. They represented to Henry, the danger to be apprehended, if the Protestant princes of the German empire, and the King of England, should aid the Duke; who, in addition to foreign succors, might likewise expect an insurrection of the Hugonots to take place in his favor. They exaggerated the strength of Sedan, the military resources of its possessor, and the hazard which must be incurred by undertaking the siege of such a city. But, these imaginary difficulties could not deter the King. Encouraged by Rosny, recently created Duke of Sully, who engaged to render him master of Sedan in a few days, he began his march at the head of a body of cavalry, accompanied by the Queen

March. He assembles forces.

Begins his march.

[p] De Thou, vol. xiv. p. 430, 431.

and

and court. Sully had orders to follow, with the infantry and artillery.[q] CHAP. VII.

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Bouillon beheld himself, by these vigorous exertions, in a situation more perilous than that of his predecessor, Robert de la Mark, near a century earlier; when, encouraged by Francis the First, he ventured to declare war on the Emperor Charles the Fifth. Neither Spain, England, nor the Protestant states of Germany, shewed any disposition to arm in his behalf; conscious that they must stand the shock of an army conducted by the greatest prince, as well as the ablest commander in Europe. No internal symptoms of insurrection appeared in France; and Sedan, though strongly fortified, was incapable of making a long resistance against such an assailant. In so desperate a condition, the Duke renewed the negotiation which he had never altogether discontinued, and demanded an immediate interview with one of the ministers, for the purpose of adjusting the terms of his submission. Villeroy, Secretary for foreign affairs, who was dispatched by Henry with that view, soon disposed the Duke to consent to every requisition; and the enmity of Villeroy to Sully, induced him to accelerate the conclusion of a treaty, which he well knew, would render useless the military preparations of his rival. Mary of Medicis herself interposing her good offices, in order to mediate a reconciliation, and to save from ruin a nobleman

Dangerous predicament of Bouillon.

He submits,

and surrenders Sedan. 1st April.

[q] Hist. de Bouillon, vol. ii. p. 276, 277. Sully, vol. ii. tome iii. p. 9—27. De Thou, vol. xiv. p. 547.

whose

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whose talents she respected, and whose adherence she desired to secure; aided Bouillon's cause. Sedan was surrendered to the King, who in return granted letters of pardon and abolition to the Duke, including all his adherents.[r]

Henry pardons him,

No sooner was the treaty reciprocally signed, than Bouillon repaired to Donchery, where Henry had established his head quarters; and arriving before the King was risen from bed, threw himself at his sovereign's feet. That beneficent prince not only forgave his fault, but replaced him in the familiarity and favor which he had previously enjoyed. Entering Sedan, Henry remained in the city three days, and left in it a governor; but at the termination of a month, he caused the citadel to be restored to its former master. On his return to Paris, he conducted the Duke of Bouillon in a sort of honorable captivity; making a public entry into the capital, accompanied by his prisoner, where he was received amidst general acclamations[s]. A profound tranquillity, which succeeded to this transitory storm, soon obliterated its remembrance. The court was immersed in pleasures and dissipation, of which Henry exhibited in his own person the example; and every circumstance appeared to promise a long continuance of the public felicity.

and returns to Paris.

[r] De Thou, vol. xiv. p. 547, 548. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 347—351. Sully, vol. ii. tome iii. p. 30—36.

[s] Hist. de Bouillon, vol. ii. p. 277—281. De Thou, vol. xiv. p. 548—550. Sully, vol. ii. tome iii. p. 36—38. Bassompierre, vol. i. tome i. p. 115, 116.

That

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That felicity was nevertheless on the point of experiencing the most lamentable interruption, by an accident which had nearly proved fatal to the King. As he was returning from the palace of St. Germain to the Louvre, in a coach, accompanied by the Queen, the Princess of Conti, together with the Dukes of Vendome and Montpensier; the horses, in passing the river Seine at Neuilly near Paris, leaped over the side of the boat, precipitating the carriage into the water. Henry, speedily succoured by the attendants, received no injury; but Mary of Medicis, who narrrowly escaped death, was ultimately dragged out by the hair, with great difficulty. A circumstance so serious in itself, and which might have terminated so tragically for the Queen, only served to afford new matter of insolent pleasantry and sarcastic ridicule, to the Marchioness of Verneuil. She even indulged herself in these effusions of malignant wit, when in the society of Henry himself, who seems not to have expressed any resentment at her unbecoming levity. Mary on the contrary, highly irritated, gave vent to her indignation; and the alienation which so many causes of offence naturally produced between her and the King, continued to subsist, if it did not augment, during the remainder of his life.[t]

Danger, incurred by the King, and Queen. 9th June.

Insolence of the Marchioness of Verneuil.

[t] Amours d'Henry IV., p. 86—88. De Thou, vol. xiv. p. 550. Journal d'Henry IV., vol. ii. p. 117. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 353, 354.

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Prosperity and tranquillity of France. — Policy of the King. — Affairs of Holland. — Conferences for peace, between the United Provinces and Spain. — Obstacles to the treaty. — Conclusion of a truce. — Terms of it. — Death of John William, last Duke of Cleves. — Disputes relative to that succession. — State of the French court. — Marriage and flight of the Prince of Condé. — Ineffectual efforts to procure his return. — Negotiations with Lorrain and Savoy. — Vast confederacy formed for attacking the house of Austria. — Reflexions on its probable effect upon the system of Europe. — Assembly of the German princes. — Prince of Condé repairs to Milan. — Preparations for opening the campaign. — Coronation of the Queen. — Assassination of Henry by Ravaillac. — Circumstances attending it. — Mary of Medicis is declared Regent. — Character of Henry.

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1606. Sterility of the French history, at this period.

THE period, including nearly three years, which elapsed immediately after the submission of the Duke of Bouillon, is perhaps more sterile in public events, and more destitute of historical matter, than any portion of time which occurs in the annals of France, during the two last centuries. If we cast a general view over the reign of Henry the Fourth, we shall find it abounding in great and brilliant transactions, from his accession down to the peace of Vervins. Even subsequent to that treaty, it still awakens curiosity, and powerfully excites

excites attention. The short war with Savoy, so rapid, and so successful; the treason, followed by the execution of Biron; the mysterious conspiracy of the family of Entragues, involved in impenetrable obscurity; lastly, the reduction of Bouillon to his duty and obedience; — all these successive actions, which conduct us forward, furnish ample subject for the historian. But, his labours seem at this point of time to suspend; and France presents, if considered politically, a species of void, till it again lights up for a short space, before the assassination of the King. Henry at length beheld himself elevated to a point of glory and prosperity, which left him nothing to envy, and little to dread. His rebellious subjects, after feeling his power, had experienced his clemency. The last great vassal of the crown had recently implored pardon, and obtained his forgiveness. He had not only subjected his revolted people, but he had humbled a more formidable Phalanx, the nobility; who since the commencement of the civil wars, under the last princes of Valois, had insensibly become the companions, and almost the equals of the sovereign. Spain, incapable of attacking him by open force, had found it equally difficult to circumvent his vigilance; while the German branch of the Austrian house was fallen into oblivion. Charles Emanuel, Duke of Savoy, despoiled in the course of the late unfortunate contest, of some of his most fertile provinces, looked to the same hand which had depressed, again to elevate him. The family of Lorrain, in all its branches, sued

Prosperity of France.

CHAP. VIII. 1606.

for his protection. England, so renowned under Elizabeth, had sunk into insignificance under James; who, tho' the sovereign of Great Britain, by unquestionable right, excited less respect, and inspired less apprehension, than a woman who only reigned by a doubtful title, over the southern part of that extensive island.

and of the King.

Henry was become confessedly, the arbiter and the umpire of Europe; the future political destiny of which portion of the globe, might be said to depend in a great degree, on his counsels and determinations.

Fermentation in the Court.

France during this period, exhibited the image of a perfect calm; and it is by the events of the surrounding states, rather than by the internal transactions of the kingdom itself, that we are enabled and compelled to continue its history; which, considered as distinct from that of Europe, may be almost deemed a blank. The court alone was agitated and tumultuous, in the midst of the national tranquillity. The jealousy of the Queen, the inconstancy of her husband, the malice of the Marchioness of Verneuil, the efforts of contending female candidates to obtain the pre-eminence in Henry's affections, and the augmenting ascendant acquired by Conchini and his wife Leonora, over Mary of Medicis;—these conflicting principles and passions, which produced a perpetual fermentation, threatened at times to excite a tempest[a]. Exhibitions of splendor or of

[a] Bassomp. vol. i. tome i. p. 116—122, and p. 126—129. Amours d'Henry IV., p. 88—92. De Thou, vol. xiv. p. 546.

page-

pageantry diversified the scene; and at the ceremony of the public baptism of the Dauphin, all the pomp of a magnificent sovereign was displayed at Fontainbleau[b]. The fertility of Mary, who successively brought into the world two other princes, seemed to assure the succession in the house of Bourbon, while it extended an additional security to the general felicity. Henry, though considerably past the meridian of life, yet from the vigor of his bodily and mental faculties, promised a reign of long duration. Educated in camps, and habituated to the exercises of a military life, he manifested little taste for sedentary pursuits, or literary occupations. While preparing to attack the Spanish monarchy on the first favorable occasion, his leisure was divided between the embellishment of the royal palaces, the recreation of the chace, the society of his mistresses, and the more pernicious indulgence of a rage for play, which characterized the age, and involved him in expences of incredible magnitude.[c]

1606. 14th Sept. Grandeur, and diversions.

These relaxations, nevertheless, did not prevent the King from discharging with severity, the public duties annexed to his station. Sully, always an enemy to those pleasures which tended to enervate his mind, and to indispose him for exertions of danger or of labour; perpetually recalled to him the considerations of glory, and the elevation of France. At the same time that he inculcated maxims so becoming

Vigilance of Henry.

[b] De Thou, vol. xiv. p. 552. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 355, 356.

[c] Bassom. vol. i. tome i. p. 114, and p. 127, and p. 134. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 305, and p. 327, 328, and p. 360.

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the minister of a great sovereign, his attention was directed to facilitate the projects of aggrandizement, of policy, or of ambition, which he recommended to his master. It must perhaps be admitted, that in some of his financial regulations, as well as in various of his pecuniary impositions, the Superintendant was more impelled by the view of filling the royal coffers, than attentive to the happiness or ability of the people. Many of the taxes were oppressive in an extreme degree; and the rigor used to enforce them among the inferior orders, accused in some measure the beneficence of the government [d]. France, though in a state of rapid and progressive prosperity, yet had neither as yet enjoyed a calm of sufficient duration, nor possessed those commercial resources, which enabled Louis the Fourteenth and Colbert, before the end of the century, to impose burdens of far superior weight.

Severity of the taxes.

1607. Foreign policy of Henry,

The vigilance of Henry was by no means confined to the encrease of his revenue, or limited to the protection of his own dominions. Pervading Europe, it anticipated or regulated all the events, which could affect the balance of political power, or overturn the existing continental system. In Italy, where Paul the Fifth had imprudently engaged in a contest with the Venetians, which threatened the degradation of the pontifical authority, and the repose of all the countries lying along the shore of the

in Italy.

[d] De Thou, vol. xiv. p. 324—326, and p. 444—446, and p. 448, 449, and p. 553, 554; and vol. xv. p. 2, 3. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 310—314, and p. 328.

Adriatic;

Adriatic; the interposition of the King mediated an accommodation[e]. It is curious to behold a Hugonot prince, who had been anathematized or excommunicated by successive popes, extending his shield, a few years afterwards, over the chair and the patrimony of the Holy See. His negotiations were sensibly felt in all the Circles of the German empire, where a great convulsion appeared to be imminent. The princes of the Austrian family, weary of the supine and passive incapacity of the Emperor, had already adopted as their chief and representative, the Arch-duke Mathias, his brother. In the following year, Rodolph, after having been compelled to resign to him the crown of Hungary, as well as the administration of the Arch-duchy of Austria, was reduced to declare him successor to the kingdom of Bohemia; sole remaining possession of his once extensive patrimonial dominions. The oppressions suffered by the Protestants, followed by the seizure of Donawert, a free imperial city of Germany, situate on the Danube, which place the Duke of Bavaria appropriated and incorporated with his own territories, in virtue of an imperial mandate;—these events gave alarming indications of approaching war.[f]

CHAP. VIII. 1607.

State of the German empire.

But towards Holland the attention of Europe was peculiarly directed, nor could Henry remain an unconcerned spectator of any event, which affected the existence of the United Provinces.

Affairs of the United Provinces.

[e] Mezeray, vol. x. p. 363—375.

[f] Pfeffel, Abregé Hist. d'Allem. vol. ii. p. 244—247. De Thou, vol. xiv. p. 638—643.

CHAP. VIII. 1607.

vinces. After above forty years of unremitted efforts against the Spanish tyranny, that power began to despair of ever reducing its revolted subjects. Neither the cruelty of the Duke of Alva, the valor and decision that characterized Don John of Austria, the sublime talents military and civil, which united in the Prince of Parma, nor the enterprize and fortune of Spinola, could atchieve the conquest of a people, impelled to resist by a just detestation of intolerable oppression. Philip the Second was no more: the Low Countries had nominally passed into other hands; and Albert, who by his marriage with the Infanta Clara Isabella, governed the Netherlands, manifested an anxious desire to terminate so destructive a contest. Spain was powerfully incited to embrace similar counsels. The general debility of that extenuated monarchy, the feeble genius of its sovereign, together with the pacific disposition of his minister, impelled them to preserve tranquillity, and to stop the vast expenditure requisite for feeding the war in Flanders. Motives still more cogent propelled the slow and irresolute cabinet of Madrid. They dreaded the maritime strength of the rising Dutch commonwealth; the loss of their colonies, Flotas, and the valuable monopoly of the trade of both the Indies. Even their own coasts were not secure from depredation, insult, and hostility. Heemskirk had recently attacked and burnt the fleet of Philip, in the bay of Cadiz, notwithstanding the greatest disadvantages arising from inferiority in the number of ships under his command; as Essex

Exhausted state of the Spanish monarchy.

Naval enterprizes of the Dutch

and Nottingham had done some years earlier, during Elizabeth's reign: while Hautain, another of the Dutch commanders, engaged the squadron returning from India, at the mouth of the Tagus[g]. The very foundations of the Spanish greatness and wealth in Asia and Africa, were in danger of being overthrown. On the coast of Coromandel, in the Moluccas, at Malacca, and at Mozambique, it became equally necessary to oppose those enterprizing enemies.[h] CHAP. VIII. 1607.

Nor had the Dutch on the other hand, less powerful reasons for inducing them to prefer peace to the continuance of hostilities. Having incurred a prodigious public debt, they laboured under heavy pecuniary burdens of every kind. The democratic party in the republic, dreaded the talents and ambition of Maurice, Prince of Orange, who aspired to possess a power more extensive than the authority constitutionally conferred on the Stadtholder; and who was adverse to every proposition of a pacific nature, as he must be thereby reduced to comparative insignificance. The United Provinces could no longer look to England, for the same protection which they had derived from Elizabeth. Neither her successor, nor the nation itself, continued to regard them with so favorable an eye; the English already beholding in their republican neighbours, a commercial rival of the most enterprizing kind. Even France might become Motives of the Dutch, for making peace. Jealousy of the English.

[g] Abregé Chron. d'Espagne, vol. ii. p. 463, 464. De Thou, vol. xiv. p. 653—656. Sully, vol. ii. tome iii. p. 124, 125.

[h] Abregé Chron. vol. ii. p. 461—464.

CHAP. VIII.

weary of contributing towards the support of a war, from which she derived no apparent profit; or might sacrifice the independence of Holland, to greater interests of state. To these foreign considerations, were added domestic apprehensions of a serious nature. Spinola, not content with repelling the enemy from Brabant or Flanders, had adopted a system of hostilities, at once more analogous to his genius, and more distressing to the States. Supplying from his own fortune the necessities of the army, and conducted by his superior skill, he led his troops over the Maese, into Zutphen and Overyssel. In defiance of Maurice, he captured various places in those provinces; retained his acquisitions by garrisons, stationed in the conquered towns; and spread a degree of terror to the gates of Utrecht and of Amsterdam.[i]

1607. Exploits of Spinola.

Suspension of arms.

Mutually impelled by reflexions of such solidity, the two powers appeared to listen with satisfaction to proposals of peace, which were made on the part of Albert and Isabella, with every external demonstration of sincerity. After a fruitless exhortation, rather than a requisition, addressed to the States by those princes, to re-unite themselves to their antient and common sovereign; it was finally agreed, as the basis of the negotiation, to regard the seven United Provinces as a free and independant republic. A truce of eight months was likewise concluded, in order to allow time for a similar declaration

14th May.

[i] De Thou, vol. xiv. p. 528—538. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 375—377. Sully, vol. ii. tome iii. p. 131.

to

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1607.

to be issued on the part of Spain, and to adjust the many important points requisite to be conceded on either side. Henry, deeply interested in the progress and termination of the treaty, instantly dispatched Jeannin, a member of the cabinet, one of the most able statesmen of his time, in quality of embassador extraordinary, to the Hague. He was received on his arrival with distinguished honors, and consulted on every article of the projected pacification. James the First, equally desirous to participate in so important a transaction, and invited by the States to take an active part in their concerns, sent two of his ministers to assist at the conferences. [k]

28th May. Henry sends embassadors to the Hague.

July.

They were nevertheless suspended almost at their commencement, by the defects or omissions discovered in the act of ratification transmitted on the part of Philip the Third. Neither the form, tenor, nor expressions adopted by the Catholic King, appeared to contain a clear and unequivocal declaration of the independence of the Dutch. The States having refused therefore, to treat either of a truce, or of a peace, till a more satisfactory assurance was given upon so essential a point, it became consequently requisite to consult the court of Madrid anew; and some months elapsed before a second instrument arrived from Spain. Even in this amended piece, though free from some of the objections made to the former, there still

Interruption of the treaty.

14th Oct.

Obstacles,

[k] De Thou, vol. xiv. p. 661—666. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 377—380.

remained

CHAP. VIII.

1607. 3d Nov. surmounted.

remained such ambiguities or reservations, as induced the States to refer it to the consideration of the respective provinces composing the republic. After mature deliberation, their deputies, assembled at the Hague, determined, though not unanimously, that it might be admitted as the ground-work and basis of a treaty; provided that in every stage of the negotiation, care was taken to obtain the recognition of their sovereignty. Thus authorized, a favorable answer was returned to the court of Brussels; and a prolongation of the suspension of hostilities was mutually agreed on, the time limited for the expiration of the subsisting truce, having nearly elapsed. The King of Denmark, and various Protestant princes of the German empire, impelled by their friendship for the Dutch, sent embassadors to Holland, which country became the centre of political intrigue, and the theatre of universal expectation.[1]

December.

1608. January. Treaty of guarantee, made by France and England.

While the ministers of the various powers prepared to commence their deliberations, the Dutch, uncertain of the final issue, and anxious to secure such a guarantee, as might compel Spain to the strict observance of the conditions, or might afford them protection against the arms of Philip; besought of the two kings of France and England, to enter into a new treaty for their defence. Henry acceded immediately to the proposition, notwithstanding the open

[1] De Thou, vol. xiv. p. 667—675. Sully, vol. ii. tome iii. p. 116, 117, and p. 143—146, and p. 152—155.

and

and violent opposition made by the bigotted members of his counsel, to the formation of an alliance with heretics. From England greater difficulties were experienced, on account of the sums due by Holland to that crown; but the obstacle being at length surmounted, James contracted engagements of the closest nature with the United Provinces[m]. Fortified by such powerful allies, they contested with vigor, not only for independence, but, for the uncontrouled freedom of trade throughout every part of the globe. In vain the embassadors of Spain, who represented the exclusive grant of the two Indies, made by the Romish pontiffs to the Spanish and Portuguese princes, refused to admit of any participation in that valuable commerce. The Dutch opposed to the pretended Papal donation, the inalienable right of every people to navigate the seas, by which nature has connected the most distant regions of the earth; declaring at the same time their resolution, rather to have recourse anew to the decision of arms, than ever to renounce so animating an incitement to industry, and so vast a source of wealth. They were not less divided respecting another article, the public toleration of the Catholic religion; on which point Philip insisted, and to which the States seemed determined never to accede. Maurice, Prince of Orange, sustained by the army, by all the enterprizing spirits who found occupation in war, and even

CHAP. VIII.

1608. 23d Jan.

June.

Disputes respecting commerce,

and toleration.

Opposition of the Prince of Orange.

[m] Mezeray, vol. x. p. 389. De Thou, vol. xv. p. 32—34.

by

CHAP. VIII. 1608.

by many of the mercantile class, who were alarmed at the idea of being precluded by a treaty from prosecuting the trade to the Indies; fomented the quarrel, and continually retarded any accommodation. His high rank in the republic, the eminent services which he had rendered to the state, and the number of his adherents, particularly in Zealand, enabled him to oppose almost insurmountable barriers to the accomplishment of peace.[n]

Embassy of Philip to Paris.

In this embarrassing situation, the Spanish cabinet, reluctant to concede a point of such vital consequence as a participation in the Indian commerce, and unable to persuade, or to compel the Dutch to relinquish it; embraced a measure, calculated, if it should prove successful, at once to enable them to dictate terms to

September.

the States. A splendid embassy was sent by Philip, to the court of France, at the head of which he placed Don Pedro de Toledo, a nobleman nearly allied by consanguinity to Mary of Me-

It's object.

dicis. He was empowered to propose the marriage of the eldest Princess of Spain with the Dauphin, offering as the portion of the bride, a complete cession to France, of all the rights possessed by the house of Austria over the Low Countries[o]. A proposition, at once so specious and so dazzling, might have deluded a prince of inferior penetration. The Emperor Charles the Fifth had allured and deceived Francis the First,

[n] Sully, vol. ii. tome iii. p. 234—238, and p. 241—245. De Thou, vol. xv. p. 34—42.

[o] De Thou, vol. xv. p. 24. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 402, 403.

by

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by similar offers of conferring the Duchy of Milan on a French prince. But, Henry easily perceived the fallacy of the donation, which was designed to secure immediate and solid advantages to Spain, in return for contingent, distant, and uncertain benefits. He was well aware how many natural and artificial impediments might arise, to prevent the accomplishment of the projected nuptials between two persons still in childhood, or even altogether to set aside the stipulations. Personal motives, as well as public reasons, rendered him averse to forming any alliance with a royal house, which, throughout his whole life had given him marks of its enmity, which had usurped by violence the kingdom of Navarre, and which he meditated to reduce within narrower limits. His plans for attacking the Spanish monarchy in every part of Europe, which were already considerably advanced, only demanded a propitious occasion to be disclosed in their full force. Charles Emanuel, Duke of Savoy, dissatisfied with the treatment which he received from the court of Madrid, and impatient to retrieve the territorial losses sustained in the late war with France; eagerly invited Henry to form an offensive treaty, for the reduction of the Milanese. The King, who had listened to his proposal, though he did not instantly proceed to carry it into execution, only deferred it for a short period [p]. In addition to so many political considerations, he was bound by the ties of

Motives of Henry for rejecting the proposal.

[p] Guichenon, vol. i. p. 790, 791, and p. 793. De Thou, vol. xv. p. 20—24.

faith

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faith and treaty, to support the United States against their antient masters. Declining therefore the offers of Toledo, he rejected every solicitation made by the Queen, to induce him to enter into connexions with the Austrian family.[q]

1608. He declines its acceptance.

30th Sept. Rupture of the conferences, at the Hague.

During these transactions, the deputies of Spain and of the Arch-duke, unable to regulate the many points contested, having finally withdrawn from the Hague, had returned to Brussels. The conferences terminated; the party of the house of Orange appeared to be triumphant, and hostilities were expected to recommence without delay. But Henry, though fully determined not to accept any overtures from Philip, however apparently advantageous they might be; yet was impelled by weighty reasons, to conclude an accommodation between that monarch and the Dutch. He wished to disarm Flanders, through which country he might speedily have occasion to pass, in the prosecution of his views against the imperial house of Austria, and in favor of the Protestant princes of the German empire[r]. Nor was he ignorant, that while the arms and exertions of the Spaniards were employed against Holland, the apprehensions entertained by the German and Italian states, relative to the ambitious designs of the cabinet of Madrid, being considerably diminished; those powers would in consequence manifest less disposition to enter with warmth, into his projects for the humiliation of

Motives of Henry, for resuming them.

[q] De Thou, vol. xv. p. 25.
[r] Mezeray, vol. x. p. 393.

the

the Spanish monarchy[s]. Actuated by political considerations of such moment, he ordered Jeannin to repair anew to the scene which he had quitted; and to endeavor by every possible exhortation, or if necessary, even menace, to effect a truce of considerable length, should it be found impracticable to conclude a definitive peace. That minister exerted himself with such energy, that the delegates of the respective powers reassembled at Antwerp; and after violent debates, a truce of twelve years was there finally settled, under the guarantee of France and England.[t]

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1609. 25th Mar. Conclusion of a truce. 9th April.

By this celebrated agreement, which suspended, though it did not terminate the hostilities, that had so long desolated some of the richest and most commercial countries of Europe, the independence of the United Provinces was virtually admitted by Philip. Nevertheless, it was rather implied, than formally recognized in the explicit terms, which the jealousy and pride of the States of Holland had wished to dictate to the court of Madrid. Nor was the permission to navigate the Indian seas, and to traffic in those remote possessions, more distinctly and specifically granted by the articles of the truce. The utmost efforts of the French and English ministers became requisite to produce the acquiescence of the Dutch in the ambiguous declarations extorted on that point, from the Spanish crown. On the other hand, all the in-

Conditions of it.

[s] De Thou, vol. xv. p. 23.

[t] Ibid. p. 43, 44. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 392—394.

stances

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stances of the Catholic King proved ineffectual for obtaining a toleration of the Romish religion; it being only in compliance with the entreaties of Henry, to whose friendship they were so much indebted, that the deputies of the Seven Provinces soon afterwards consented to relax the severity of the penal laws against the Catholics. Even the relaxation granted, amounted simply to a permission of performing the exercises of devotion in private houses, without molestation. Each power continued in possession of the cities and fortresses respectively occupied by them, at the time of signing the truce, which was proclaimed with apparent demonstrations of universal joy, at Brussels, and at the Hague.[u]

Expulsion of the Moors from Spain.

Philip, who had thus compulsively and reluctantly consented to the emancipation of Holland, committed almost immediately afterwards, a voluntary fault of far greater consequence to the internal prosperity of Spain. At the instigation of the tribunal of the Inquisition, he had the weakness to issue orders for the expulsion of near a million of his most laborious and industrious subjects. The Moriscoes, descendants of the Moors who had been reduced to subjection by Ferdinand and Isabella, more than a century earlier; unable to defend themselves against the overwhelming power of the crown, proscribed by the incapacity and bigotry of their sovereign, and abandoned by every power, either Christian or Ma-

[u] Sully, vol. ii. tome iii. p. 332—334. De Thou, vol. xv. p. 43—49. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 394, 395. Bentivoglio, p. 378—387.

hometan;

hometan; were driven from their native homes and possessions, to seek a precarious asylum on the inhospitable shore of Barbary. The southern provinces, in particular Valentia, Murcia, and Grenada, depopulated and uncultivated in consequence, long reproached the pernicious intolerance of the government, which vainly endeavoured to remedy the evil that it had produced. It must be confessed that the animosity of Henry towards the house of Austria, however great we may suppose it, could scarcely have inflicted on Spain a more deep and incurable wound [x]. Louis the Fourteenth, uninstructed either by the wisdom of his grandfather in the male line, or by the error of his grandfather in maternal descent; committed a still more indefensible act of imbecile and ruinous bigotry, when within eighty years afterwards, he revoked the edict of Nantes; thus compelling many hundred thousand of his best subjects to expatriate themselves, precisely as Philip had transported the Morescoes to the coast of Africa.

1609. Its effects.

The occasion which Henry had so ardently desired of attacking a family, which in both its branches had long impressed Europe with terror; by a singular coincidence of circumstances presented itself, nearly at the precise time of the signature of the truce between Philip and the Dutch. John William, Duke of Cleves, expired after an illness of short dura-

Death of the Duke of Cleves.

25th Mar.

[x] Abregé Chron. vol. ii. p. 465. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 395—397.

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tion, leaving no issue. His dominions, consisting of the three Duchies of Cleves, Juliers, and Berg, the Counties of La Mark and Ravensperg, and the Lordship of Ravenstein, rendered him one of the most powerful princes of the German empire. Those fertile territories, watered in their whole extent, by the Rhine and the Maese; stretching from the gates of Nimeguen, nearly to the walls of Coblentz; lay contiguous on their western frontier, to the duchy of Limburg, one of the ten provinces of the Netherlands, joining likewise the territories of the United States in Gelderland. It necessarily became therefore an object of the most serious nature, to the King of Spain and to the Arch-duke on one hand, as well as to the Dutch republic on the other, to provide that so rich an inheritance should not fall into the hands of an enemy. Various pretenders laid claim to the vacant succession, on opposite grounds or principles. The deceased Duke having left four sisters, three of whom had issue, it seemed apparent that the husbands, or the sons of those princesses, possessed the most incontestable title. But, Christian the Second, Elector of Saxony, opposed to their claims of consanguinity, a donation or expectative, conferred on one of his ancestors in the fifteenth century, by Frederic the Third, in virtue of a recognized prerogative belonging to the German Emperors; namely the right to dispose of all fiefs even before their vacancy. He maintained likewise that the fiefs in question, were masculine and

Extent of his dominions.

Claims of the various princes.

and indivisible in their nature, according to the received jurisprudence of the Germanic empire.[y] CHAP. VIII.

1609.

A question of such magnitude, and involved in such perplexity, ought, in compliance with those fundamental, recognized usages, to have been tried before the Aulic council; the only competent tribunal for discussing matters arising out of the feudal system or chaos of Germany. But in order to enforce the sentence which might be there passed, an emperor was demanded, of another description than Rodolph. That feeble prince, it is true, endeavoured to become umpire of the contest, by evoking the cause to himself; and the Elector of Saxony, secure of receiving from him the eventual possession of the fiefs in dispute, submitted instantly to the imperial requisition. Rodolph did not even hesitate to confer on him the investiture, though by a second edict he enjoined the sequestration of the litigated countries; authorizing his cousin, the Arch-duke Leopold, Bishop of Passau, to take possession of them, till the final decision should take place. Meanwhile, the Elector of Brandenburg, and the Duke of Neuburg, a collateral prince of the Palatine house, who both, in virtue of their descent from the two eldest sisters of John William, seemed to possess the fairest claims on his dominions; conscious that they would be

Rodolph the Second evokes the cause to himself.

Elector of Brandenburgh, and Duke of Neuburg,

[y] Pfeffel, vol. ii. p. 247, 248. Sully, vol. ii. tom. iii. p. 362—369. L'Art de Verif. tome iii. p. 187. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 413, 414. De Thou, vol. xv. p. 68—70.

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ejected by the Emperor, from any share in their partition, manifested no deference for his injunctions. Entering the provinces to the east of the Rhine, at the head of their respective forces, they advanced to Dusseldorf, capital of the duchy of Berg, into which city they were immediately received. They had previously agreed, in a conference held at the town of Dortmund, to govern the contested countries in common, under the title of princes possessors; and the States who were assembled at Dusseldorf, readily acknowledged them as provisional sovereigns.[z]

31st May. enter Dusseldorf.

16th June.

Leopold seizes on Juliers.

During these transactions, Leopold having been commissioned by the Emperor, rendered himself master of the city and citadel of Juliers: while Rodolph published a new decree, by which he declared all persons who should afford assistance to the Princes of Brandenburg or Neuburg, guilty of treason, and put to the Ban of the Empire. As it appeared nevertheless evident, that France would take not only an interest, but even an active concern in the dispute; Albert and Isabella instantly dispatched an embassador, for the purpose of acquainting Henry with the motives for Leopold's seizure of Juliers. He was speedily followed by the Count of Hohenzollern, sent on the part of Rodolph himself, who endeavoured to justify the act, as founded on the principles of the German constitution; professing at the same time, his

Various embassadors sent to Henry.

[z] De Thou, vol. xv. p. 70. Pfeffel, vol. ii. p. 249. Heiss, vol. ii. p. 440—442.

Imperial Majesty's intentions to relinquish the territories sequestered, as soon as the right to them could be decided. Nor did the two Protestant Princes of Brandenburg and Neuburg omit to plead their cause before the same tribunal; where they joined in earnestly soliciting the King to aid them in ejecting the House of Austria, from any interference in the succession to the dominions of Cleves. It was not more difficult for the contending parties to foresee, on which side Henry's inclinations, as well as his policy, would induce him to fix, than for the Scots to have anticipated the decision of Edward the First between Bruce and Baliol. Nor did Henry leave the contending parties long in uncertainty, relative to his ultimate resolution. Secure of the strenuous co-operation of the United Provinces, who, terrified at the appearance of so formidable a neighbour as Leopold, offered the King to break the truce recently concluded with Spain; urged by the greater part of the Protestant states of the German empire, who dreaded the further aggrandizement of the Austrian family; and assured of the assistance of the Duke of Savoy, on the side of Italy; he did not hesitate to promise affirmative aid to the confederate princes. His troops began immediately to assemble in Champagne, and preparations were made for commencing active hostilities. [a]

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July.

He promises aid to the Protestant princes.

Notwithstanding however the apparent decision and celerity of these movements, which

State of the court of France.

[a] De Thou, vol. xv. p. 71, 72.

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seemed to indicate the vigour of the cabinet; neither tranquillity nor unanimity were found in the court of France. Mary of Medicis, actuated by jealousy and detestation of the Marchioness of Verneuil, continued to render the palace of the Louvre, a scene of perpetual altercation. Instead of attempting to reclaim her faithless husband by the arts of gentleness and conciliation, she lent all her confidence to Conchini and his wife Leonora, who abusing their ascendancy over her, excited her to vengeance.

Influence, and power of Conchini, and Leonora.

It may appear scarcely credible that two Florentine adventurers, obscure in their origin, and endowed with no pre-eminent talents, should impress with a degree of apprehension, the greatest monarch in Europe, even in the midst of his capital, surrounded by his guards and courtiers. But the fact, however extraordinary, is not lest certain, that Henry, whose facility and indecision in private life, equalled his valor in the field; could never be induced by any remonstrances, to order the seizure or removal of two insolent incendiaries, who indirectly menaced to take revenge, if he proceeded to acts of violence against their persons. Nor could the Queen on the other hand be persuaded voluntarily to dismiss them, though every effort was made for that purpose by the King's command, through the medium of those individuals, whose attachment to her honor and person was unquestionable. If any unexpected accident should deprive the country of her sovereign, it was apparent to all France, that the

the influence of Conchini and his wife over their mistress would become unbounded, and might not improbably involve the kingdom, as well as eventually themselves, in the greatest calamities. [b] CHAP. VIII. 1609.

A circumstance which took place at this period, by encreasing the misunderstanding that subsisted between Henry and the Queen, filled the court with confusion, and greatly inflamed the other existing causes of quarrel with the house of Austria. It originated in the same unrestrained indulgence of his passion for that sex, which on so many other occasions, had obscured his glory, or embittered his repose. Neither the charms of the Marchioness of Verneuil, the attractions of the Countess of Moret, nor the beauty of the lady of Essarts, with all of whom he lived in an avowed commerce of gallantry, could prevent him from becoming sensible to the superior graces of Henrietta de Montmorency, daughter to the Duke of the same name, Constable of France. Her high birth and quality formed no impediment to his designs upon her person, which, though veiled for some time, even as it would seem, from himself, were unquestionably of the most dishonorable nature. She was in the first bloom of youth and beauty ; nor did the disparity of age between them, prevent her from receiving with complacency, the attentions of so great a sovereign. [c] Her father had destined her hand

Attachment of the King, to Henrietta de Montmorency.

[b] Mezeray, vol. x. p. 400—402. Sully, vol. ii. tome iii. p. 185—194.

[c] Amours d'Henry IV., p. 92.

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for Bassompierre, a young and accomplished courtier, who held a distinguished place in the King's regard. But Henry, apprehensive that her seduction might prove more difficult, if she should be married to a man who possessed her affections, contrived to set aside the match, and to substitute in the place of Bassompierre, Henry, Prince of Condé. It was not however without some hesitation, after having received from the King's own mouth, every assurance which could satisfy him relative to the virtue and chastity of his future bride, that Condé consented to espouse her. [d]

Her marriage with the Prince of Condé.

Henry, Prince of Condé, first prince of the blood, was at this time, scarcely twenty-one years old; and though destitute of shining parts, betrayed more sensibility, as well as resentment, at the manifest intentions of the King to dishonor his bed, than, it was probable, were expected by the monarch. After the celebration of the nuptials, finding that Henry's conduct afforded an unequivocal testimony of the same design, he began by removing the Princess from court. Her absence, far from extinguishing, encreased the violence of the King's desires. Unrestrained by decorum, by reflexions on his own age, station, and example, or by any respect for the sanctity of a marriage to which he had eminently contributed; Henry did not blush to attempt the gratifi-

He removes her from court.

[d] Bassomp. vol. i. tome i. p. 135—149. Cabinet d'Henry IV., vol. i. p. 227—230. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 407—409.

cation

cation of his criminal passion, by descending to the most unbecoming acts. Concealed under a disguise, accompanied by some companions and instruments of his pleasures, he repeatedly endeavoured, under shelter of the night, to visit the young Princess, at the castles of Chantilly, and of Verteuil, to which she had been successively transferred by her husband's just appresions [e]. Alarmed at such a conduct, the Prince remonstrated with a warmth proportionate to the injury. The King, far from manifesting any repentance, but incensed at his temerity, withdrew the appointments issuing out of the royal treasury, which constituted the principal part of Condé's revenue. A proceeding so unworthy, excites just indignation. Sully, who whatever opposition he might have made to Henry's marriage with Gabrielle d'Estree, does not appear to have been under the influence of any scruples, moral or religious, when his master's licentious inclinations demanded to be gratified; ventured indirectly to menace the Prince with exile or imprisonment, if he did not instantly, in compliance with Henry's orders, bring back his wife to court. [f]

1609. Attempts of Henry, to seduce the Princess.

August.

Menaces of Sully.

After so peremptory a declaration, the object of which he could not mistake, the Prince with reason conceived that his only safety lay in flight. Having therefore mounted the Princess

29th Aug. Flight of Condé.

[e] Memor. recon. tome ii. p. 87. Cabinet d'Henry IV., vol. i. p. 230, 231.

[f] Cabinet d'Henry IV., vol. i. p. 232, 233. Sully, vol. ii. tome iii. p. 343.

on

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on horseback behind him, he took the road to Flanders, and reached Landrecy, a town situate beyond the frontiers of the French dominions, the same night. Albert and Isabella, unacquainted with the motives for his retreat, and anxious to preserve the Netherlands in repose at a moment of such critical importance; no sooner received intelligence of his arrival, than they dispatched to him the Duke of Arschot, with injunctions to Condé to quit their territories within the space of three days. He obeyed, and retired to Cologne, after having previously sent his wife to Brussels, where she was entrusted to the care of Philip, Prince of Orange, his brother-in-law, who resided in that city, as a subject of Spain. But, at the suggestion of Spinola, and in compliance with the express directions of the court of Madrid, Condé soon afterwards obtained permission to repair to Brussels in person. He was there received with the greatest honors by the Archduke and Isabella, entertained magnificently by Spinola, and assured of meeting, both for himself, and for the Princess, with the protection due to their elevated rank and misfortune.[g]

His reception, at Brussels.

Henry demands the Prince from Albert.

Henry did not attempt to conceal the agitations of his mind, on receiving intelligence of so unpleasing an event. A hasty and disorderly council, composed of the principal ministers, having been held in his presence; after

[g] De Thou, vol. xv. p. 80, 81. Bassomp. vol. i. tome i. p. 175, and p. 178, 179. Sully, vol. ii. tome iii. p. 344. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 410.

many

many opposite opinions, it was finally determined to demand of the court of Brussels, the immediate delivery of the persons of the Prince and Princess. Praslin, a nobleman distinguished by the royal favor, who received orders to repair thither, was authorized to spare neither menaces, promises, nor presents, in order to effect the object. Albert, apprehensive of the King's indignation, and dreading an invasion of Flanders in case of refusal, inclined towards yielding a compliance with Praslin's requisitions. But the species of dishonor, which must result from abandoning two persons of the highest quality, who had fled to him for an asylum against royal violence; when joined to the sentiments of female modesty and virtue struggling in their behalf, in the bosom of the Arch-duchess; these emotions prevented their listening to any inducements of an unworthy or interested nature. They replied therefore in terms of the utmost deference and respect, that they could not violate the laws of hospitality, by surrendering up a Prince who had taken refuge in their dominions: but, that the King might be assured he would never depart in the slightest degree, from the duty and allegiance due to his sovereign. On neither side was any express mention made of the Princess, though it was well understood in the two courts, that her detention constituted the principal object of Henry's anxiety. [h]

October. Answer of the court of Brussels.

[h] Bassomp. vol. i. tome i. p. 176—178. Cabinet d'Henry IV., vol. i. p. 235—241. Sully, vol. i. tome iii. p. 345—352. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 410, 411. De Thou, vol. xv. p. 81, 82.

When

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1609.

Reflexions on the transaction.

When we reflect upon the nature of this transaction, and consider the conduct of the King, in thus attempting to gain possession of the person of a Princess recently married, for purposes the most contrary to every principle of honor; when we further call to our recollection, that Henry had already attained his fifty-sixth year, that he had not been married more than nine years to Mary of Medicis, and that his dissolute amours constituted a subject of the most scandalous publicity; — when we allow these facts their full operation on our minds, we must reluctantly confess that all sense of shame, and all respect for virtue, were become nearly extinct in the King's bosom. Neither Louis the Fourteenth, nor Charles the Second, his two grandsons, though both those princes gratified their passion for the sex at the expence of decorum, ever proceeded to such a point of profligacy. If we would look for any parallel, it can only be found in antiquity. Appius Claudius and Tarquin only consummated the deed, meditated by Henry. It must be avowed that these deep shades of excess, cover his memory with a sort of opprobrium; while they seem to exhibit a very degrading picture of the morals of that court and age, which could view with indifference or apathy, such proceedings.

Resentment of Henry.

Incensed at the presumption of Albert and Isabella, in sheltering a prince of the blood, who might become a dangerous instrument in the hands of the Spaniards; and driven almost

to

to a state of distraction, by the loss of the Princess of Condé; Henry resolved to inflict vengeance on the authors of this double misfortune and affront. His passions coinciding on the occasion with his policy, accelerated every operation of the cabinet. Bassompierre had been already dispatched to the court of Nancy, in order to commence a negotiation with Henry, who had recently succeeded to his father Charles the Third, in the dukedom of Lorrain. He was instructed to demand the daughter of the newD uke, in marriage for the Dauphin; and as that Prince was destitute of male issue, such an alliance would, it seemed highly probable, at some future time unite Lorrain to the French crown. The proposal, after considerable irresolution on the Duke's part, was accepted; and the King thus secured at once a valuable ally, while he opened to his posterity the prospect of so important an augmentation of territory: an augmentation which was not effectuated by the incorporation of Lorrain with the French monarchy, till considerably more than a century afterwards, under the reign of Louis the Fifteenth[i]. Bassompierre was ordered to proceed into Germany, with the view of attaching to Henry's interests the Elector Palatine, the Duke of Wirtemberg, and other princes of the empire; a commission which he executed with equal dexterity and success[k].

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Negotiation with Lorrain,

and with the German princes.

[i] Bassompierre, vol. i. tome i. p. 152—156, and p. 161—172.
[k] Ibid. p. 156—160.

With

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With the Duke of Savoy the King entered into the closest ties of union, political and personal. A treaty was concluded between them, by which they stipulated to attack the Milanese with their joint forces, it being agreed that the duchy, if conquered, should remain under the dominion of Charles Emanuel; whose territories thus augmented, should be constituted a kingdom, and the title of King of Lombardy be revived in his person. As the strongest proof of their mutual sincerity, Henry's eldest daughter was contracted in marriage to the Prince of Piedmont; pensions of very considerable value were conferred by the crown of France, on the three younger sons of the Duke of Savoy; and Philibert, the second Prince, was created Duke of Chartres. The commencement of hostilities was only delayed till the ensuing spring; at which time it was fixed that Lesdiguieres, who commanded the French troops in Dauphiné, should join his forces to those of Charles Emanuel, in order to penetrate into Italy.[1]

1609. Treaty with Savoy. 3d Nov. Conditions.

28th Dec.

1610. Confederation, formed by Henry.

Already that vast political confederation, which Henry had laboured during so many years to complete, and which appeared to be on the point of giving Europe a new aspect, together with a new balance of power, prepared to enter on action. We cannot contemplate without a degree of amazement approaching to incredulity, the magnitude and extent of

[1] De Thou, vol. xv. p. 76—79. Guichenon, vol. i. p. 793—795. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 404, 405. Sully, vol. i. tome iii. p. 403, 404, and p. 417, 418. Bassompierre, vol. i. tome i. p. 180—183.

the

the powers, which were thus combined to one point. James the First, King of Great Britain, neither from character, nor from inclination, was disposed to take personally any active part: but his eldest son, Henry, Prince of Wales, a youth of martial and enterprizing talents, eager to signalize himself under so great a commander as Henry the Fourth; though only sixteen years of age, had repeatedly and recently engaged to conduct six thousand infantry, and five hundred horse, to that monarch's assistance[m]. Maurice, Prince of Orange, was authorized by the republic of Holland, to promise fifteen thousand foot, besides three thousand cavalry; and the confederate princes of the German empire furnished a similar number[n]. The united forces of Savoy and Venice amounted to twenty-nine thousand men, independent of eleven thousand assembled under Lesdiguieres[o]. The King himself undertook to assume the command of the grand army, consisting of twenty-five thousand foot, and five thousand horse, accompanied with twenty cannon[p]. However small such a body of forces, and such a park of artillery, may appear to us in the present age, who have witnessed the exertions made in the field by France under Bonaparte since 1803; Europe at the commencement of the seventeenth century, had not

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1610.

England.

Holland and Germany.

Savoy, and Venice.

Military force of France.

[m] Sully, vol. ii. tome iii. p. 457, and p. 463.
[n] Idem, ibid. D'Aubigné, Hist. Univ. vol. iii. p. 542.
[o] Sully, ibid. D'Aubig. ibid.
[p] Sully, vol. ii. tome iii. p. 446. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 422, 423.

beheld

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beheld any army so numerous, or so well appointed. All the internal regulations of police or of finance, which by giving energy to the operations of war, could accelerate the expected success, were adopted by Henry. The kingdom, tranquil in its interior, and accustomed to obey, was administered with vigor. Sully had laid up in the Bastile, a sum in specie amounting nearly to a million of pounds Sterling; and he possessed effects, or letters of exchange, capable of being immediately converted into money, for another half million [q]. Such was his systematic œconomy, his intimate knowledge of the pecuniary resources of France, as well as his ability in discovering modes of supplying the treasury, that he had engaged to furnish all the demands for so many armies prospectively, during four or five years. [r]

Funds for the war.

Plan for dividing the Austrian, and Spanish provinces.

The partition and distribution of the kingdoms or provinces, projected to be dismembered from the two branches of the house of Austria, were framed with equal judgment, and attention to the respective pretensions of the confederates. It was settled that, of all the continental powers combined in the actual league, France alone should not receive, at least immediately, any ostensible territorial augmentation; Henry aiming, as he professed, rather at the diminution of the power of Philip and Rodolph, than at the encrease of his own

[q] Sully, ibid. p. 472, 473.
[r] Ibid. p. 468—471.

dominions.

dominions[s]. This moderation proved highly useful in conciliating the various states of Europe, who having been long accustomed to dread the ambition of Charles the Fifth, and of Philip the Second, still retained the impression of terror, even after the obvious decline of the Spanish monarchy. The seven United Provinces were destined to be rewarded for their co-operation, by the permanent acquisition of some parts of the Austrian Netherlands[t]. To Venice was assigned the island of Sicily, and a portion of the Milanese lying along the banks of the river Adda[u]. The dignity of King of the Romans, and the reversion of the imperial crown of Germany after the decease of Rodolph, were offered to the Duke of Bavaria; it being intended to restore the Hungarians and Bohemians to their antient right of electing a sovereign on every vacancy of the throne[x]. These plans, if they had been consummated, would have reduced the German branch of the Austrian house, to the state of weakness and insignificance in which they were plunged during the fifteenth century, under Frederic the Third. Sweden and Denmark were intended to be admitted as allies, to share in the territorial spoils of Germany: while it was meant to enlarge the Helvetic confederacy,

[s] D'Aub. Hist. Univ. vol. iii. p. 543.
[t] Sully, vol. ii. tome iii. p. 460.
[u] Ibid. p. 462. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 406.
[x] Sully, vol. ii. tome iii. p. 461, 462. D'Aub. vol. iii. p. 542, 543.

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1610. Assent of the court of Rome, to it.

by the addition of the Tyrol, Alsace, and the County of Burgundy[y]. Even Paul the Fifth, who filled the chair of St. Peter, seems to have tacitly, if not formally, acceded to this vast league; although aimed at the demolition of the very power, from which the Holy See had always received the most steady support. The donation of the kingdom of Naples, to which the Romish Pontiffs had for ages advanced pretensions, overcame his scruples, and vanquished his repugnance. It would be difficult to credit this fact, if it did not rest on indubitable authority[z]. Philip, thus bereft of all his Flemish, Italian, and other scattered possessions lying along the shore of the Mediterranean, except Sardinia and the Balearic islands; would have been confined to the continent of Spain extending between the Pyrenees and the Atlantic, his garrisons on the coast of Barbary, together with his vast colonies in Asia, Africa, and the New World. The treaty of Utrecht, which actually reduced the Spanish monarchy to those limits, would have been anticipated by near a century; and France would have become under Henry the Fourth, by the voluntary consent of the other powers, as she effectively was by force at a later period, under Louis the Fourteenth, the arbitress of Europe.[a]

If

[y] Sully, vol. ii. tome iii. p. 381.

[z] Ibid. p. 462. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 406, 407. De Thou, vol. xv. p. 88.

[a] That Henry the Fourth had not only projected to divide Europe into fifteen states, and to form from their union a species of Com-

If we reflect on the condition of the two branches of the Austrian family at this period, we

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Commonwealth, or "Republique Chretienne," which should enjoy perpetual peace; but, that he long revolved, weighed, and perfected the outline of his plan, is incontestable. However gigantic, chimerical, puerile, or impracticable, the design itself may justly be considered; it is not the less true, that he meditated such a system. We find every minute detail respecting it, related in Sully; even to particulars incredibly exact and trifling. Nay, we shall see that as early as 1601, he communicated his ideas and designs to Elizabeth, Queen of England; who professed at least to admire them, as some of the most sublime conceptions of the human mind. But, she was too wise and too experienced, not to express at the same time, her doubts of their practicability; chiefly on account of the difference of religion among the European states. She even undertook to make known Henry's plan to the Kings of Sweden and Denmark; as well as to obtain their co-operation. On her death in 1603, it seems that the King remained for some time, in despair of ever atchieving so arduous a work; and that he so expressed himself to Rosny, with marks of the most lively concern. But, with the elasticity natural to an ardent mind bent on accomplishing a favorite point, he soon resumed its prosecution. Rosny was ordered to sound James the First upon it, only four months after his accession to the crown of England. He did so; and though James appears, from his timidity, or his good sense, to have started many objections; wishing to temporize, and wait for a more proper juncture in which it might be reduced to practice; yet he agreed to the plan itself. Fourteen articles, comprehending the material points of the confederation of the "Republique Chretienne," being drawn up, were finally settled between James and Rosny.

Far from renouncing the project as impracticable upon longer reflexion, Henry in 1609 seriously intended to undertake its completion. We may read in Sully, the instructions drawn up for Boissise, Fresne Canaye, Baugt, Ancel, and Bongars, who were sent as envoys from France, to the different courts of Germany, Italy, and the North of Europe. They are very ample, and leave no room to doubt of the King's intention to effect it if possible. The two grand objects of the plan seem to have been, first, to maintain peace and preponderance between all the Christian states; and secondly, to carry on a perpetual war against the Infidels. Voltaire, in his zeal for the memory and character of Henry the Fourth, has thought proper to treat this plan as a chimera, which never existed. But, his assertion certainly cannot be put in competition with Sully's authority. Mezeray ad-

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we shall be still more inclined to admit that Henry's plan for their humiliation, was neither ideal, nor subject to any obvious disarrangement of its parts. It is in fact difficult to say how so formidable a coalition, led on by the first prince in Europe, cemented by mutual interest, and supported by adequate military forces, as well as pecuniary funds, could have been opposed with success. Philip the Third and his minister the Duke of Lerma, were equally destitute of talents for meeting the conflict, as they were deficient in means for turning aside the shock; nor, however extraordinary and inexplicable such conduct appears, do they seem to have made any exertions for the purpose. Spain, depopulated by the recent expulsion of the Moors, stood in want of every sinew for active hostility; while the finances were in a deplorable state of exhausture and confusion[b]. Albert and Isabella, hopeless of issue, exposed to the immediate attack of the French arms, and having only just extricated

Inability of Spain to resist the confederacy.

Weakness of Albert,

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mits the reality of the project, though he very rationally doubts, whether a King of fifty-six years old, who was frequently troubled with the gout, could well flatter himself with bringing it to a conclusion. Henry would, it is probable, have agreed on that point with the historian; while he might still have exerted himself to overcome the impediments to its accomplishment. It is unnecessary to say more on a subject, which can only amuse the imagination; and which plan expired, like all his other vast intentions, with the life of its projector. See Sully, vol. ii. tome iii. p. 378—385, and p. 390—400, and p. 401—426. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 407. Voltaire, Œuvres Complettes, vol. x. p. 221.

[b] Abregé Chron. d'Espagne, vol. ii. p. 464.

them-

themselves from a war with the Dutch; beheld with natural apprehension, the approach of a new and more powerful enemy. Rodolph the Second, oppressed by bodily infirmities; unskilled in all the arts becoming a prince destined to reign over so many kingdoms and provinces; odious to his successor Mathias, and despised by his subjects; could only remain a spectator of the contest. Even the German branch of the house of Austria, was itself divided into two great and rival factions. Mathias, who already hoped to obtain the Imperial crown, as well as the hereditary possessions of his brother Rodolph, found a competitor arising for both, in the person of his cousin the Archduke Ferdinand, son of Charles, who founded the Austro-Styrian line. Spain warmly espoused the pretensions of Ferdinand, which were on the point of arming the two princes against each other; a contest which, it was highly probable, could only be decided by the sword[c]. Every circumstance leads us to suppose, that a vast revolution in the state and system of Europe, was on the point of taking place, and that it was only prevented by Henry's assassination.

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1610. and of the Emperor.

Division in the Imperial family.

Meanwhile, the Protestant princes of the German empire, together with deputies from a number of the free Imperial cities, alarmed at the seizure of Juliers by Leopold, met at

January. Assembly at Hall.

[c] Pfeffel, vol. ii. p. 247—253. Heiss, vol. i. p. 435—439, and p. 445, 446.

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the city of Hall in Swabia. Boissise, dispatched by the King of France, appearing in the assembly, gave assurances in his master's name, of vigorous support, as soon as the season would admit of putting himself at the head of his forces. Encouraged by the positive promise of so powerful an ally, the princes adopted resolutions of energy, fixed the respective proportions of soldiers to be levied by each, and assigned funds for their subsistance in the field. The Elector Palatine, Frederic the Fourth, was declared chief of "the Union," the supreme command of the troops being conferred upon the Prince of Anhalt. On the other hand, the three ecclesiastical Electors, Cologne, Mentz, and Treves, apprehensive that the antient religion of the Empire might be endangered or subverted; set on foot a counter association, for the maintenance of the Catholic faith, the German constitution, the possessions of the church, and their own liberties. The members having met at the city of Wurtzburg in Franconia, assumed the name of "the League," and placed at its head, the Duke of Bavaria. They appear nevertheless, to have acted with far less decision than their antagonists, though they were openly supported by the Emperor, and secretly aided by the cabinet of Spain. [d]

Resolutions embraced in it.

Meeting at Wurtzburg.

Negotiations at Brussels.

During the whole course of the winter, the negotiations existing between the two courts of

[d] Pfeffel, vol. ii. p. 249—251. Heiss, vol. i. p. 442, 443. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 418—421. De Thou, vol. xv. p 72—76. Journ. d'Henry, IV., vol. ii. p. 209—211.

Paris

Paris and Brussels, relative to the Prince of Condé, were never suspended. D'Estrées, who had been dispatched by Henry for that purpose, exerted all the arts of persuasion in order to dispel his apprehensions, and to induce him voluntarily to return into France. Albert and Isabella professed to leave him perfectly at liberty to follow the dictates of his own judgment and inclination. They even affected to advise his compliance with the King's wishes: but they still refused to compel him to abandon the asylum which he had embraced[e]. Unable to accomplish by eloquence or address, the object of his mission, d'Estrées had the audacity to project a scheme for carrying off the Princess. She appears, herself, like Helen at Sparta, to have lent to it more than a negative approbation, and to have engaged to facilitate her own flight or escape from the palace of the Prince of Orange, in which she resided. The plan was discovered only a few hours previous to its intended execution; and the government, when apprized of the enterprize, took efficacious measures for rendering it abortive. In order however to prevent the repetition of similar attempts, the young Princess was removed to the Archducal palace, and there placed under the immediate protection of the Infanta herself[f]. D'Estrées, thus frustrated in all his efforts, no longer observed any measures with the Prince,

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Unsuccessful attempt of d'Estrées.

February.

[e] De Thou, vol. xv. p. 81, 82.

[f] Memor. recond. tome ii. p. 113. Cabinet d'Henry IV., vol. i. p. 248. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 411, 412.

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whom he enjoined in Henry's name, to repair to his presence without delay, on pain of being treated as guilty of treason. Condé declined obedience to the order; but, apprehensive that a longer stay at Brussels might prove dangerous to his safety, he quitted the city with a few attendants, travelled through a considerable part of Germany in disguise, passed the Alps, and arrived safely at Milan. His wife remained under the safe-guard of Albert and Isabella.[g]

Condé repairs to Milan. 31st March.

Conduct of Fuentes towards him.

The Count de Fuentes, governor of the Milanese for Philip the Third, received the fugitive prince with demonstrations of extraordinary respect; though he in fact adopted every precaution to prevent the escape of an individual, who, from his near alliance by consanguinity to the sovereign of France, might be made eminently subservient to the purposes, or instrumental to the policy of the court of Madrid. Under pretence that the King had set a price of one hundred thousand Crowns upon Condé's head, Fuentes gave him a guard of horse and foot: nor was he permitted to continue his journey to Rome, where he designed to invoke the paternal interposition and mediation of Paul the Fifth, in his favor. Previous to his departure from Flanders, he had ventured to disperse a Manifesto, highly reflecting on Henry's government, but peculiarly levelled at Sully, as the inventor of a number of oppressive and intolerable taxes. The indignation which it excited

April.

Manifesto of the Prince.

[g] De Thou, vol. xv. p. 82.

in

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in the royal breast, became augmented by the consideration that Condé had sought protection from the Count de Fuentes, a Spaniard, the implacable enemy of the French nation, and in particular, of the house of Bourbon. A secret negotiation was nevertheless commenced thro' more than one channel, with the Prince, the object of which was to effect his return to Paris, and the oblivion of all past transactions. His situation at Milan, surrounded with spies, necessarily imposed obstacles to its progress; and the assassination of Henry, which took place immediately afterwards, left uncertain, its final event.[h]

Preparations of Henry, for war.

During these transactions, the preparations for opening the campaign, advanced with the utmost expedition. Detachments of troops had already begun their march towards the frontiers of the province of Champagne, where the general point of union was fixed at the town of Mouson. A vast train of artillery followed the army; and the King wrote to the Archduke Albert, demanding a free passage for his forces thro' the Netherlands. It was determined to form a council of regency for the administration of affairs during Henry's absence, at the head of which, should be placed the Queen. The magnitude of the military levies and equipments, left no room to doubt that an object far more extensive than the single attack of Juliers, was in contemplation. While the

[h] De Thou, vol. xv. p. 82—86. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 412, 413.

eyes

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eyes of Europe were fixed with anxiety and interest on the issue of the enterprize, Spain alone, against whom it was principally directed, remained in a state of torpid security, or of incomprehensible lethargy[i]. No measures were embraced, either in Flanders, or in Italy, for sustaining the apprehended invasion; and Albert, by a letter couched in terms of submission, addressed to Henry, but which answer did not arrive till after that monarch had expired, allowed him to pass without molestation, thro' the Flemish territories[k]. Notwithstanding these seemingly prosperous or auspicious appearances, a degree of silent fermentation pervaded the capital and the nation; the superstitious multitude having imbibed an impression respecting the King's motives for commencing war, highly inimical to its success. Reports were industriously circulated thro'out the kingdom, that he was about to attack the Pope; and the Papal Nuncio at Paris, not acquainted with the secret intentions of his court, gave some countenance to the rumour[l]. The adherents of the "League" and of Spain, who were active in arraigning the motives, or defaming the conduct of Henry; did not hesitate to assert, that the Princess of Condé, another Helen, would, in imitation of that fatal beauty, involve Europe in a general conflagration.

Fermentation in Paris,

and thro' France.

[i] Sully, vol. ii. tome iii. p. 446, and p. 480. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 424.

[k] Sully, vol. ii. tome iii. p. 401. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 426.

[l] Cab. d'Hen. IV., vol. ii. p. 253. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 421, 422.

But,

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But, the most painful opposition to his political designs, as well as the greatest interruption to his private repose, originated in his own household. Mary of Medicis could not behold without the natural sensations of an injured, or a slighted woman, his continual acts of personal inconstancy. She was content, indeed, passively to suffer his amours; but she refused to aid, or in any measure actively to facilitate their gratification [m]. Her bigotted adherence to the Catholic religion, and her strong predilection for the house of Austria, from which she derived her descent; induced her to regard with no less disapprobation than concern, the approaching rupture, as well as the King's alliance with heretical states. Conchini and his wife, by malignant and artful insinuations, still further alienated the Queen's affections from her husband. They even carried their presumption so far, as to infuse into her mind apprehensions, that he might be capable, from the extravagance of his passion for the Princess of Condé, of repudiating Mary, and raising to the throne, the object of his fondness [n]. Impelled by these suggestions, the Queen ardently solicited Henry's permission that her coronation might be solemnly performed at St. Denis; representing to him that the public effect of such a ceremony would render her person more sacred, and her authority as regent, during his

Dissatisfaction of the queen.

Causes of it.

4th April. She demands to be crowned.

[m] Memor. recond. tome ii. p. 260.

[n] Mezeray, vol. x. p. 425. Cab. d'Hen. IV., vol. i. p. 258, 259.

absence

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absence from the kingdom, more venerable in the opinion of the nation. The King, on its first mention, objected with warmth to the proposition, for a double reason; the delay which must be unavoidably incident to the preparations requisite for such a solemnity; and the expence occasioned by it, at time when all his treasures might be found inadequate to the public demands. Vanquished nevertheless by Mary's importunities, which he knew not how to resist, he at length gave orders for its execution, and even hastened all the requisite decorations made for its celebration. It took place with extraordinary pomp, in the abbey of St. Denis, amidst an immense concourse of people; Henry himself assisting as a private spectator, and issuing the necessary directions during the ceremony. The public entry of the Queen into Paris, was fixed to be made on the fifteenth of the month; almost immediately after which, the King intended to mount on horseback, in order to join his forces in Champagne.*

13th May. Her coronation.

Agitation of Henry.

The French writers of that period, deeply impressed as they were themselves, at the atrocious nature, as well as at the lamentable effects, of Henry's violent death; have described him previous to the blow, as haunted by continual apprehensions of some imminent and invisible

* De Thou, vol. xv. p. 86—88. Cabinet d'Hen. IV., vol. i. p. 260, 261. Journal d'Henry IV., vol. ii. p. 215—217, and p. 218—224. Sully, vol. ii. tome iii. p. 476, and p. 481. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 426, 427. Bassomp. vol. i. tome i. p. 186, 187.

danger.

danger. If we could credit their assertions, nature seemed to participate in the impending calamity: even inanimate objects, trees and rivers, foretold in mystic language, his approaching fate. Mankind in every age, has been prone to read the history of the great, through the medium of fancy, terror, and superstition; nor is it difficult with such assistance, to transform the most common occurrences or accidents, into omens and prodigies. There is nevertheless a degree of scepticism beyond that of reason, in refusing altogether to believe, that Henry felt himself in a state of unusual agitation, during several days preceding his assassination. It would seem clear, that he even burst at times into querulous lamentations, or expressed himself in doubtful language, relative to his departure on the expedition to Germany[p]. But, these marks of a distempered imagination, or an uneasy mind, may perhaps be naturally explained, without having recourse to supernatural causes for their solution. The enterprize which he was on the point of commencing, however admirably planned in itself, and however secure of apparent success it might appear; was yet so vast, so complicated, and dependant on so many springs, that no human wisdom could ascertain its result.

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Reasons of it.

Nor was he ignorant that malevolence and bigotry had traduced his motives for taking up

Domestic dissentions.

[p] Bassomp. vol. i. tome ii. p. 185—188. Sully, vol. ii. tome iii. p. 476—479. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 427—431.

arms.

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arms. In the interior of his family, the jealousy of the Queen, the insolence of Conchini, and the dangerous ascendancy which he and his wife Leonora had gained over Mary of Medicis; while it embittered his present happiness, filled him with anxious apprehensions for futurity. The first prince of the blood remained in the hands of Fuentes, Henry's mortal enemy; and the princess, whose attractions had proved so injurious to his repose, was still detained at Brussels. Well knowing that the genius of the time was prone to acts of violence and ferocity, he dreaded their effects: he had even received intimation of attempts meditated against his person, from various quarters; and Horoscopes, to which a considerable degree of involuntary belief was then given by the most enlightened men, had fixed his death to take place in the fifty-seventh year of his age [q]. We must not imagine that Henry the Fourth, however superior he might be to princes in general, was free from human infirmity, credulity, and weakness. Brave in the field, even to intrepidity, and accustomed to regard death in the ranks of war, with perfect composure; he was nevertheless equally accessible to the emotions of fear, with other men. Even Sully admits, that a prince so dauntless in battle, seemed to be less than a woman when in a coach; that he cried out whenever the vehicle appeared likely

Credulity of the age.

[q] Mezeray, vol. x. p. 430. D'Aubig. Hist. Univ. vol. iii. p. 544. Tavannes, p. 279.

to overturn, and betrayed the utmost timidity. Henry himself, who avowed the fact, accounted for such extraordinary apprehensions, by informing his minister, that it had been predicted, he should die in a coach[r]. When we reflect on all these circumstances, it cannot excite our wonder, that he exhibited symptoms of a mind oppressed, irresolute, and struggling with depression: nor can we perhaps altogether avoid participating ourselves, in the very superstitious terrors, which our reason impels us to reject and to repel.

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A celebrated French writer of the last century, has justly observed, that in the "death "of Henry the Fourth, the fatality or force of "destiny seems to be more felt, than in any "other event of history[s]." That his predecessor, occupied in besieging Paris during a time of rebellion, when the minds of the French people were inflamed to a degree of delirium; should be immolated by a fanatic monk, in order to rescue his party from impending destruction and punishment; appears natural, however execrable. But, after the lapse of more than two hundred years, we have every reason to believe that the design of assassinating Henry the Fourth, was conceived in silence by an ignorant enthusiast of the lowest description, confirmed by reflexion, and executed without an accomplice of any kind[t]. Francis Ravaillac,

[r] Sully, vol. ii. tome iii. p. 477. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 434.
[s] Voltaire, Œuvr. compl. vol. x. p. 227.
[t] Tavannes, p. 279.

a native

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a native of Angouleme, the perpetrator of so detestable a deed, having served his noviciate in a monastic order, afterwards procured a scanty subsistance, by following the profession of a schoolmaster, in his native city. His abhorrence of the professors of the reformed religion, which rose to a degree of fury, inspired him with ideas of the most sanguinary kind, against heretics. Imbued with an opinion that the King extended at least a secret and indirect protection to that class of his subjects, and believing that he was about to commence war on the papal see; Ravaillac formed the resolution of reasoning with him; and if he should find Henry incorrigible in error, of assassinating him as the enemy of God [u]. Being repulsed with blows by the guards, in an attempt which he made to approach the King when in his coach, he set out on his return to Angouleme, and seemed to have renounced his design: but, while performing his devotions before an image of Christ suffering flagellation, which was placed in the suburbs of the town of Estampes, he felt the savage purpose regenerate in his bosom. Pursued by the insatiable desire of perpetrating the act, he whetted his knife anew, the point of which he had previously broken; took the road again to Paris, and there waited for an occasion to accomplish the crime. [x]

Motives, which induced him to stab the King.

[u] De Thou, vol. xv. p. 102, 103. Procés de Ravaillac, cited by Voltaire, vol. x. p. 227, 228.

[x] De Thou, vol. xv. p. 104, 105. Journ. d'Henry IV., vol. ii. p. 239. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 431—433. Voltaire, ibid. p. 221—229.

On

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1610. 14th May. Circumstances of Henry's assassination.

On the morning of the day when Henry perished, he appears to have been engaged in giving directions respecting his expedition, and in accelerating all the necessary preparations for his departure. After having dined, he lay down, with intent to take some repose; but being unable to sleep, he rose, passed a few moments in fervent prayer, and then walked for a considerable time in his apartment, a prey to uneasiness and dejection. In order to divert his chagrin, having determined to visit Sully, who resided at the arsenal, in a distant quarter of the capital; he commanded his coach to be prepared for that purpose. When it was ready, he dispatched Vitry, captain of his guards, with directions to hasten the workmen employed in decorating the courts of law, for the Queen's entry into Paris; ordering the guards themselves to remain at the Louvre. No less a number than seven noblemen having seated themselves in the carriage with him, among whom were the Dukes of Epernon and Montbazon; the curtains were drawn up, partly on account of the beauty and warmth of the weather, but still more, in order to enable the King to view the preparations making for the approaching ceremony. Two carts, one of which was laden with wine, and the other with hay, having impeded the passage in a narrow street; the greater number of the domestics in attendance, quitted the royal coach, with intent to rejoin it beyond the carts. Two footmen only remained, one of whom advanced forwards,

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wards, intending to clear the way; while the other was occupied in adjusting a part of his dress. At this precise moment, Ravaillac, who during the embarrassment, had been able, unnoticed, to remark in what part of the carriage Henry was seated; mounting on one of the hind wheels, and drawing his knife, struck the King on his left breast. The instrument glanced on one of his ribs, without penetrating his body; but the assassin, perfectly collected in himself, repeated the blow. At the second stroke, the knife entering his heart, intersected it with such violence, that the blood rushing impetuously upwards, suffocated him on the instant, before he could distinctly utter a single expression. [y]

He is carried back to the Louvre.

No sooner had the fatal accident taken place, than the noblemen present having quitted the carriage with precipitation, caused the curtains to be lowered, and ordered it to return to the palace of the Louvre. A cloak was thrown over the King, in order to conceal him from sight; and with a view more effectually to deceive the people, a surgeon and wine were demanded, as if he had been only wounded; though such was the violent effusion of blood, produced by the knife of Ravaillac, that the whole street was stained with gore, as they carried him back to the palace [z]. Epernon,

[y] Hist. d'Epernon, vol. ii. p. 319—321. Journal d'Henry IV. vol. ii. p. 225, 226. De Thou, vol. xv. p. 88, 89. D'Aubig. His. Gen. vol. iii. p. 544, 545. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 433, 434. Tavannes, p. 279.

[z] Journ. d'Hen. IV., vol. ii. p. 227. D'Aub. vol. iii. p. 545.

nevertheless, whose presence of mind seems never to have forsaken him, having perceived among the attendants, the Marquis of Montferrand, dispatched him instantly forward, to order the troops on guard at the Louvre, to stand to their arms, for the protection of the Queen and Dauphin[a]. A few moments afterwards, the body of the unfortunate Henry arriving, was taken out, carried up stairs, and laid all bloody, on the same bed where he had so recently sought in vain for repose. It remained in that situation during several hours, exposed to the view of those persons, whose curiosity or attachment to their deceased master, induced them to pay him the tribute of a last farewell.[b] 1610.

Measures of the Queen, for securing the regency.

Mary of Medicis, after some exclamations of grief, or rather of surprize, at the untimely fate of her husband, appears to have easily suspended the course of her lamentations, in order to take such measures for her own safety and the attainment of the regency, as the urgency of the occasion demanded from her. They were at once so able and so rapid, that historians observe, not without reason, they could never have been better concerted or executed, even if the event of the King's assassination had been foreseen[c]. All the avenues leading to the Convent of the Augustins, where the Parliament of Paris then held its meetings, were occupied by various detachments of

[a] Hist. d'Epernon, vol. ii. p. 322, 323.
[b] Bassomp. vol. i. tome i. p. 189, Mezeray, vol. x. p. 435.
[c] De Thou, vol. xv. p. 91.

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troops; and as that assembly was actually sitting at the precise time when the King was assassinated, Mary commanded them by a message notifying the Catastrophé, instantly to deliberate on the question of delegating to her the regency. They obeyed; and Epernon, in order to accelerate their resolution, entered the hall where they were met, with his sword undrawn in his hand. Addressing them in the Queen's name, he besought the President to notify their determination, which was expected with the utmost impatience at the Louvre. The Parliament, thus invested by an armed force, and propelled to a decision by Epernon, did not long hesitate in conferring on Mary the regency. We can never sufficiently wonder at the rapidity of these events. Henry enjoyed perfect health at four o'clock in the afternoon; and by half an hour past six o'clock of the same day, however incredible the fact seems, his widow was declared regent by the Parliament. Modern history presents no similar instance of so sudden a transfer of the supreme power, in virtue of the deliberations of a legislative body.[d]

The Parliament deliberates,

and declares her regent.

If any other circumstance of that extraordinary day can excite our equal astonishment, it is that not one of seven individuals who were in the coach with the King, should either have seen Ravaillac mount on the wheel, or have been able to interpose in time to save

Seizure of Ravaillac.

[d] De Thou, vol. xv. p. 91—94. Journ. d'Hen. IV., vol. ii. p. 227—231. Bassomp. vol. i. tome i. p. 191, 192. Hist. d'Epernon, vol. ii. p. 330—345.

their

their sovereign. The cool and intrepid assassin continued to repeat his blows, even after he had given the mortal wound. In the tumult and consternation which ensued, it is believed that he might easily have effected his escape from the spot; but, incapable of flight, and exulting in his crime, he remained motionless on the place, holding in his hand the bloody instrument with which he had perpetrated the deed. On being questioned respecting it, as he readily avowed the act, the fury of the attendants would have immediately sacrificed him, and swords were already drawn for the purpose: but Epernon, and the other noblemen present, mindful of the reflexions cast upon those individuals who had hastily put to death Clement, the assassin of Henry the Third, arrested the rage of the spectators, and restrained the populace. Ravaillac being conducted by some of the guards, to the palace of Retz, situate near the Louvre, where he remained during two days; was from thence transferred to the "Conciergerie," previous to undergoing his interrogatory and trial.[e]

His imprisonment.

The province of the historian may be said in some measure to stop, with the narration of the circumstances attending Henry's death; as his character stands little in need of elucidation, and still less, of panegyric. Whe-

Character of Henry the Fourth.

[e] Journal 'dHenry IV., vol. ii. p. 238. De Thou, vol. xv. p. 89, 90. Hist. d'Epernon, vol. ii. p. 321, 322. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 434, 435.

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ther we consider him as the conqueror of France, and the restorer of the monarchy; or whether we contemplate him in the more amiable light of the legislator and benefactor of his people, he equally excites our admiration. All the great qualities, which during many years of adversity, were exhibited by Henry of Bourbon, King of Navarre; acquired new lustre, and attained to full maturity, when he ascended the French throne. It may be reasonably doubted whether in any age of the world, a prince has appeared among men, who united in himself more excellent and rare endowments of every kind. We must necessarily regret, but we cannot deny, that they were obscured by material faults and weaknesses, if they do not more properly deserve to be denominated vices. His licentious amours, which subverted his private felicity, produced public calamity, while they were equally contrary to decency, morality, and religion. Nor was his passion for play less violent, though its effects, as confined to himself, were less injurious. We may see in Sully, and in Bassompierre, how much the rage of gaming, encouraged by his example, pervaded the capital and the court. His desire of amassing treasures, tho' it did not originate in avarice, like that of Henry the Seventh among us; yet induced him to encourage his ministers, particularly Sully, in exacting from his subjects, contributions beyond their strength. The institution of the "Paulette," which was a tax levied on the vacancy, or the resig-

His defects, and faults.

Oppressive taxes.

resignation of all legal employments, excited general murmurs, and became productive of the most scandalous venality in the department of the law. [f] 1610.

It excites astonishment to reflect that in the space of only nine years, which elapsed from the peace concluded with Savoy, down to the period of his death, he was able to extinguish almost all the immense domestic and foreign incumbrances of the crown, while he layed up in the Bastile, a sum of above a Million Sterling. So large a proportion of gold and silver coin, could not have been withdrawn from the national circulation, without great injury or embarrassment to commercial transactions. He was accused, probably with reason, of yielding from his natural facility, to importunity, the recompenses which ought only to have been confined to merit, talents, and virtue. Like all princes who have been extricated by the efforts of a party, from a state of adversity and depression, the imputation of ingratitude was laid to his charge. It was said that he forgot, and neglected his antient adherents, in order to enrich and elevate his enemies. But it must be remembered, that he was compelled to purchase the submission of the heads of "the League;" and we may doubt whether either his courage, his clemency, or his abjuration of the reformed religion, would have extinguished that powerful faction, without the aid of money. Those per-

His facility.

Accusations of ingratitude,

and of injustice.

[f] Mezeray, vol. x. p. 310—314.

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sons who severely scrutinized his actions, asserted that he tolerated and connived at acts of injustice committed in the tribunals of law; where the judges enjoyed complete impunity, provided that in return they manifested a blind and implicit obedience to his edicts. There will be found nevertheless on examination, at least as much malignity, as there is truth, in the accusation.

His virtues.

If, from the consideration of his defects, our eyes are turned to his virtues, we shall equally love and venerate his memory. His very name is almost become proverbial, to express the union of all that is elevated, amiable, and good in human nature. Such was his magnanimous disdain of injuries, that it reached to heroism. Louis the Twelfth did not exceed him in this respect. The Duke of Mayenne, from his enemy, became his friend; and the young Duke of Guise not only professed, but felt for Henry, the warmest degree of affectionate devotion[g]. All the enmities and hereditary antipathies of "the League," became extinct under his reign. We know, that he expressly ordered Vitry to receive into the company of his body guards, the soldier who had wounded him with a ball, at the combat of Aumale. Henry pointed him out to Marshal d'Estrées, as the man mounted guard at the door of his coach[h]. In the single instance of Biron,

Magnanimity, and forgiveness of injuries.

[g] Bassomp. vol. i. tome i. p. 187, 188.
[h] Amours d'Henry IV. Receuil, p. 7, 8.

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it is true that he remained inexorable; but it ought not to be forgotten, that Biron was at once guilty and obdurate. Henry neither put him to death from feelings of personal resentment, nor from mere considerations of state policy. The last necessity alone induced him to refuse pardon to a nobleman, whose projects were levelled at the succession in the house of Bourbon, as well as at the safety of the monarchy of France itself. No evidence can more strongly attest the fact, nor prove the repugnance with which he abandoned Biron to the sword of the law, than his answer to the noblemen who sued to him for the forgiveness of that state criminal. [i]

Love for his subjects.

His affection towards the inferior classes of his subjects, in particular towards the peasants, whom he cherished and protected, as the most necessary, but, the most oppressed and injured description of his people; this sentiment, which drew upon him the benedictions of the age in which he lived, justly endears him to posterity. He was neither ignorant of his own worth, nor did he affect to be inconscious that he merited universal esteem. The confession involuntarily escaped from him on various occasions. Only a few hours before he was assassinated, upon the morning of that very day, as if by a secret warning of his destiny, he said to the Duke of Guise, and to Bassom-

[i] De Thou, vol. xiv. p. 70, 71.

pierre,

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pierre, "You do not know me now; but I "shall die one of these days, and when you "have lost me, you will know my value, and "the difference between me and other men[k]."

Expressions of his self-esteem.

"The kings, my predecessors," said he on another occasion, addressing himself to the deputies of the clergy, "have given you splendid "words; but I, with my grey jacket, will give "you effects. I am all grey without, but all "gold within."[l]

Protection of letters.

Educated in the field, amidst civil wars, and accustomed to the life of a soldier, he delighted little in pursuits of literature; but he was neither unacquainted with polite letters, nor deficient in extending a liberal protection to men of genius. Du Perron, Matthieu, Scaliger, Casaubon, Sponde, and a number of other eminent writers, received pensions from the treasury, or were raised by Henry to eminent honors and dignities[m]. The love of glory, and the desire of honorable fame, as distinct from, and as opposed to that destructive passion which we commonly denominate ambition, constituted the predominant feature of his character. Louis the Fourteenth was perpetually and systematically occupied during his long reign, in acts of wanton and unjust rapacity, in order to extend the frontiers of his dominions. Henry on the contrary, proposed to become the arbiter

Love of glory.

[k] Bassomp. vol. i. tome i. p. 187, 188.

[l] Journ. d'Hen. IV., vol. i. p. 198.

[m] Amours d'Henry IV., Receuil, p. 24—26. Sully, vol. i. tome i. p. 395.

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of Europe, by his magnanimous moderation. We see in the Memoirs of Sully, an authority which cannot well be called in question, that he did not reserve a foot of land to augment the territory of France, from the conquests expected to be made by that vast confederacy, which he was on the point of putting into action, when assassinated by Ravaillac. Artois, and French Flanders, countries which would have covered his northern frontier, by protecting Picardy and Champagne; it appears, were to have been distributed in fiefs, to various individuals: while Alsace, and the County of Burgundy, equally important for the protection of France on the eastern side, were destined for the Switzers. Rousillon and Cerdagne, so indispensable for the safety of Languedoc on that exposed quarter, it was intended to leave to Spain, of which monarchy they constituted a portion [n]. All these provinces were afterwards gained by Richlieu, or conquered by Louis the Fourteenth. It is true that Henry projected to acquire Lorrain, and likewise the duchy of Savoy; but the former acquisition, if realized, would have resulted from the marriage of his son the Dauphin, to the heiress of Lorrain. The possession of Savoy was only a contingent event, to take place on the supposition of the Duke, Charles Emanuel, remaining peaceable possessor of the Milanese. [o]

[n] Sully, vol. ii. tome iii. p. 460, 461. Mezeray, vol. x. p. 407.
[o] De Thou, vol. xv. p. 79.

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1610. Comparison of Francis the First with Henry the Fourth.

The similarity of many points of character between Henry the Fourth and Francis the First, is so obvious, as almost to provoke a comparison between them. Both were illustrious princes, and Henry was flattered by the resemblance with his predecessor. In that species of valor which we call heroism, it is difficult to decide which of them was pre-eminent. Francis did not display greater contempt of danger at Marignano, or at Pavia, than Henry manifested at Coutras, at Arques, and at Ivry, as well as on many other occasions. But Francis was commonly unfortunate in the field, while Henry always carried victory with him. The former prince might be esteemed a Paladin of romance; the latter added the qualities of a general, to the intrepidity of a knight errant. Yet both manifested more temerity than prudence, when at the head of armies. In peace, as the legislator and father of his people, the founder of the house of Bourbon, challenges an unquestionable preference: nor could Francis boast of any minister who can enter into a competition with Sully, either in energy of mind, in economy, or in financial capacity. The Constable of Bourbon, and the Marshal Duke of Biron, alike entered into treaties with the enemies of the state. But, we pity and excuse the Constable, while we condemn Biron. Francis is not to be justified for his treatment of that unfortunate nobleman, whom he compelled by persecution to throw himself into

the arms of Charles the Fifth. Biron was only impelled by his own impetuous, misguided, and vindictive temper, to enter into treasonable connexions with Philip the Third, and the Duke of Savoy.

In their inordinate passion for the other sex, both sovereigns committed the greatest excesses; and the calamitous consequences of Francis's amours, embittered, while they abbreviated his life. Yet was he far less culpable, considered as a king, than Henry; who, in his infatuation or licentious violence of desire, seemed to forget all his duties, moral or political, and made every thing subservient to his gratification. The Duchess d'Estampes, and the Marchioness of Verneuil, both sacrificed their native country, at the shrine of their private interests or enmities. In comparing the two kings, we ought not in candour to forget that Francis acceded at the early age of twenty, while Henry had attained his thirty-sixth year before he ascended the throne. As husbands, they were alike culpable; but Henry claims more indulgence for his infidelities to Mary of Medicis, than his predecessor can justly challenge for his treatment of the virtuous and unfortunate daughter of Louis the Twelfth. It is as the patron and protector of letters, that Francis carries away the palm. On this point there can be no concurrence between them. But in their kingly capacity, it seems impossible to deny

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deny that Henry merits infinitely the highest place.

1610. Portrait of the King, drawn by himself.

If we would behold the portrait of Henry, drawn by himself, we may see it in one of his letters addressed to Sully, only three years before his assassination. It cannot be perused without emotions of mingled pleasure and admiration. "Whenever," writes he, "the occa- "sion shall present itself for executing those "glorious designs, which you well know that "I have long projected; you shall find that "I will rather quit my mistresses, hounds, "gaming, buildings, banquets, and every other "recreation, than let pass the opportunity of "acquiring honor: the principal sources of "which, after my duty to God, my wife, my "children, my servants, and my people, whom "I love as my children, are to attain the re- "putation of a prince tenacious of his faith "and word; and to perform actions at the "end of my days, which shall immortalize and "crown them with glory and honor[p]." It is nevertheless an incontrovertible, though a melancholy fact, that he was neither known nor beloved as he deserved, during his life. The intimate acquaintance which his contemporaries had with his personal infirmities; the vast distance at which his birth had placed him from the crown to which he succeeded; his long adherence to a religion held in abhorrence by the

He was not beloved during his life.

[p] Sully, vol. ii. tome iii. p. 138, 139, letter of the "8th April, 1607."

majority

majority of his subjects, many among whom continued to doubt the sincerity of his abjuration; lastly, the implacable animosity of the inveterate adherents of Spain and of "the League;" —these causes or circumstances traduced his character, and aggravated all his faults. But time, the test of truth, has fully unveiled him to mankind; and after the lapse of more than two centuries, posterity has justly assigned him one of the highest places among those princes, whom Providence in its bounty sometimes raises up, for the felicity and ornament of the human race.

Similarity between Henry the Fourth, and Louis the Eighteenth.

Notwithstanding the dissimilarity, or we might more properly say, the contrast, which the characters of Henry the Third and of Louis the Sixteenth present, considered as individuals; yet we have seen that the unfortunate resemblance existing between them as sovereigns, produced under both reigns, nearly the same results. The profligate indolence of the former, and the passive acquiescence or inaction of the latter prince, during a period of popular innovation, overturned the throne, while it brought them both to a tragical and premature end. It may with equal truth be asserted, that though Henry the Fourth and Louis the Eighteenth bear little similarity to each other in the leading features of their private and personal characters as men; yet is the analogy between them in their kingly capacity, most striking and incontestable. Both succeeded

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ceeded nominally to the French crown, not in direct, but in collateral descent; one, as related by a remote tye of consanguinity in the male line, with his three predecessors of the house of Valois; the other, as brother or uncle to the two preceding kings. They both passed a great portion of their lives in exile, under sufferings and privations of the severest kind. Henry, at the foot of the Pyrenees, exposed to the secret enmity of Catherine of Medicis, and to the open hostility of the Guises: Louis, as a fugitive in the continental courts, pursued by the rage of the Jacobin republicans; or attacked by the more concealed and atrocious arts of the Italian adventurer, who, under various Roman designations, Consular or Imperial, had seized on the supreme authority in France. Each of them displayed the utmost constancy, equanimity, and superiority to adverse fortune; rejecting with equal firmness, the insidious offers made to shake their principles, or to bend them to unworthy renunciations of any kind. The two kings alike found in England their best support. One, from the wise and magnanimous policy of Elizabeth, who extended to him pecuniary and military assistance, during the periods of his greatest depression. The other, from the generous protection of George the Third, or the noble sympathy and fraternal attachment of his son, the Regent of Great Britain.

Both princes re-ascended the subverted throne of St. Louis. The first, principally by the

the persevering exertion of that courage, activity, and energy, with which nature had so eminently endowed him. The last, recalled by the lassitude, exhausture, and abhorrence, which the systematic tyranny, as well as the insatiable ambition of their Corsican ruler, had produced throughout France. If Henry overcame and extinguished the Hydra of "the League;" Louis has beheld the fall of a more destructive and formidable monster, whose sanguinary traces, not confined to the French territory, are to be found at Madrid, and at Moscow, marked by massacre, or by conflagration: a monster, for whom the most sterile rock of the Mediterranean, or of the Baltic, would have formed too mild a prison. Henry and Louis, at the distance of two hundred and twenty years, have, each, entered Paris, amidst the acclamations of the loyal and the virtuous part of the inhabitants. Each found a country and a capital, destitute of morals, habituated to revolutionary scenes of blood, deprived in a great degree of industry, manufactures, commerce, and all the domestic employments or occupations, the attendants of peace and internal tranquillity. Henry, within the space of sixteen years, by the mixture of wisdom, vigilance, frugality, clemency, and moderation, which met in his composition; restored France to her just place in the scale of nations, while he diffused felicity and abundance throughout the interior of his dominions. We are equally authorized confidently to hope, that a prince

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distinguished for his prudence, benignity, enlargement of mind, oblivion of injuries, and mature experience; all which qualities have passed through the crucible of adversity; will, like his illustrious prototype and ancestor, erase the memory of past enormities, resuscitate morals, revivify industry, and open from the æra of his auspicious return to France, a new period in the history of Europe, and of the civilized world.

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